



# GENIUS AND CRIMINAL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

SOME PERSONS UNKNOWN  
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF  
SCIENTIFIC DETECTION

"Sherlock Holmes in the laboratory!  
A fascinating book,"—*Morning Post*.



SELF-PORTRAIT OF FRANZ J.

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Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner.)





# GENIUS & CRIMINAL

A. STUDY IN REBELLION

BY

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*An inadequate tribute  
of respect,  
this book is dedicated  
to  
DOCTEUR EDMOND LOCARD,  
Vice-President  
of  
the International Academy of  
Criminology,  
Chief of the Laboratory of  
Technical Police, Lyons, to whom his  
friend and colleague the Author  
owes a great deal.*



## PREFACE

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There is a bibliography at the end of this book, and the author further wishes to acknowledge the

assistance which reference to the works there quoted has rendered to him in compiling this one.

My thanks are also due to my wife for suggestions and for reading the proofs.

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## APPROACH



## THE CRIMINAL TYPE

### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL QUESTION

A WELL-KNOWN French detective is supposed, on one occasion, to have remarked that the ordinary policeman always thought that everybody ought to be in prison, and that, as a matter of fact, he was not far wrong.

For those of us who are not policemen—they are presumably the exceptions that try the rule—this is a very depressing conclusion. Nor is it of much assistance in considering the problem of criminal anthropology. Theoretically it may be true, but in practice a distinction is made between the man who robs a bank, and that type of financier who robs his shareholders but keeps within the law. The distinction is arbitrary, but it exists.

Some sort of differentiation then remains, arbitrary if you will, as between the non-criminal and criminal man. There are two schools of thought diametrically opposed. The English School regards the criminal as a normal man who has gone wrong. The Continental School

has it that the criminal is the abnormal man who cannot go right.

It is for this reason that the theory of the "Criminal Type" originally formulated by one of the greatest alienists who has ever lived, Lombroso, literally rent Europe in twain. Exaggerated though the theory was in its original form there was nothing inherently absurd about it. It was consistently misunderstood and misrepresented by its opponents. They thought they were condemning its inferences from facts and its logic ; in fact it was its ethic which outraged them.

It is generally known that Lombroso claimed that criminals were an anthropological type, that a criminal could be recognized by the shape of his skull in exactly the same way that anthropologists differentiate the races of mankind by their mean cranial measurements.

Lombroso's life was a monument of colossal industry. He measured the skulls and bodies of thousands of criminals. It is not the least remarkable fact about a remarkable man that his data recorded with such scientific impartiality should accord so ill with the conclusions he drew from them. The facts compiled so patiently and industriously are really quite inconclusive. Yet when the exaggerations and unsound inferences are removed there remains a residue of fact which it seems difficult to

contest. It is impossible always to connect the abnormal skull with abnormal morals, but popular instinct is sound when it differentiates the "high" and the "low" type. In this connexion the interesting experiment of Sir Francis Galton has great significance. What, on a last analysis, is meant by the high and the low types?

This eminent statistician prepared a composite photograph of a number of criminals by superimposing the negatives and making a print. He further made a similar photograph of a number of men of the physical and mental type chosen for the crack regiments of the British Army. It is a remarkable fact that all the criminal heads and faces corresponded at a surprising number of points. So also did the selected army types. From these photographs a common type of the normal and the criminal man was evolved. It is also interesting to discover that Galton found that the expression of villainy supposed to be stamped upon the criminal face was merely accidental. The deciding factor was the shape of the skull and the face.

The science of criminal anthropology now tends to veer round once more in favour of the basic theory of Lombroso. But it is free of the exaggeration which the early criminal anthropologists thrust upon it. Dr. Charles

Goring in his book, *The English Convict*, is said to have administered the *coup de grace* to the theory of the criminal type. He did nothing of the sort. Goring's book was a brilliant piece of work, and his observations were at least as accurate as Lombroso's, but in his conclusion he was not less prejudiced against the continental theory, than was its author in favour of it. He found that anthropological measurements of English criminals varied as much as those of the normal, and came to the conclusion in consequence that measurement in itself proved nothing at all. He was, no doubt, quite right, but it would have been surer ground to have contented himself with the assertion that the measurements themselves were extraordinarily difficult to interpret.

Galton's photographs, on the other hand, were a sounder method, and more or less easy to interpret. The evidence seems, on the whole, to support Lombroso as against Goring.

But it is not surprising that a man who asserted with all the energy of which his energetic nature was capable that he had discovered criminal instincts even in fly-eating flowers and in insects should have been met with derision and sneers. There is, however, another and a very much more interesting reason why Lombroso's theory stirred up so fierce a con-

troversy. It was that element in it recognized by modern science as sound which was the real occasion for stumbling.

Cesare Lombroso's name ought to be held in grateful remembrance for ever, for he was the first man to insist that the criminal was more important than the crime. English law does not even now recognize this principle; the English alienists only to some extent. It is for this reason that our penal system is described by some continental critics as the harshest in the world. This is an exaggeration, but there exists in it a basis of truth.

We are inclined to regard crime from the ethical point of view and to seek moral justification for punishing it. This is not only absurd but highly dangerous. The law exists to protect the community against the individual, and the only justification for legal punishment is the theory that it deters. Lombroso and his school clearly recognized this, and all their work had for its motive a study of the criminal which might result in dealing with him in such a way as best to protect the community. Some of the methods suggested were drastic. A large body of opinion, for example, which included that of the distinguished Italian jurist Garofalo, held the view that all habitual criminals ought to be painlessly destroyed. If it could be shown that no other effective deter-



rent existed, from a legal point of view this conclusion would be perfectly justifiable. Such evidence is, however, not available. There is no satisfactory evidence that even in regard to murder the death penalty is really effective.

But the issue as to the function of legal punishment is clear. It ought to be framed so as to ensure as far as possible that the punishment fits the criminal and not the crime; that it may be such as to prevent the criminal damaging the community again. The rest can be left to the theologians.

There is another sense in which Lombroso's theory has been grossly misinterpreted. The standard argument used against the theory of the criminal type was, and remains, that the virtuous often present the stigmata of the reprobate. It has been retorted upon those who follow this line of controversy—and justly—that for them virtue seems to reside in keeping out of prison. To some extent Lombroso was responsible for this misunderstanding. There are passages in *L'uomo delinquente* which seem to suggest that the man or woman with criminal stigmata must necessarily end in gaol. But his theory was not thus understood by Ferri, and probably arose from the fact that he was there discussing those who actually were or had been in prison. Lombroso did make the mistake of being over-preoccupied

with the abnormal. It remains true that a criminal may be a criminal and yet escape the prison or the gallows. To go a step further is to reach the heart of one of the problems with which this book is concerned. Is a man or woman a criminal by reason of conviction for some criminal offence, or is there such a thing as criminality *sui generis*, a criminal point of view, a criminal habit of mind?

Curiously enough, the rock upon which the anthropological theory is said to have broken was the famous discussion which raged about the skull of Charlotte Corday.

In 1889 the skull was exhibited at the Congress of Criminal Anthropology in Paris. Lombroso, Topinard, and Benedikt all examined it. In Lombroso's opinion, since it was platycephalic and asymmetric, the skull was abnormal. Topinard, while agreeing with Lombroso's observations, considered them of no importance. A year later Benedikt published a very elaborate paper on the skull, in which he found many normal characteristics, but noted the remarkable deviations observed by Lombroso. He agreed with both and with neither.

A more unsatisfactory illustration could hardly be advanced as a test case. Who shall decide if Charlotte Corday was a criminal or no? She murdered Marat in his bath in circumstances in which any competent court

might now decide were such as to require a verdict of justifiable homicide. Many there are indeed who would hail it as a meritorious act. There were no other incidents in her life upon which even conventional legal standards could frown; and it is impossible, in any case, to apply conventional legal standards in the middle of a revolution.

Charlotte Corday's skull may have been a formidable problem, but no more formidable a problem than Charlotte Corday.

If the value of a theory can be judged by its persistence, Lombroso's is not without worth. It persists in a modified form on the Continent, its two most consistent and eminent supporters being Ferri and Garofalo. It is worth noting in this connexion that the widely differing observations relating to criminal anthropology depend to some extent upon the nationality of the criminals observed. There seems to be no doubt at all that French, Italian, and Spanish criminals appear as more definite anthropological types than do those to be found in English prisons.

On the other hand, this may be due only to the fact that the continental observers, more interested in the theory than those in England, have collected more material. Criminology cannot be said to exist as a science in England. Lombroso's theory in its modified form has been

criticized by many amateur criminologists with no qualifications to discuss it. It is depressing to note that these criticisms, many of them in the facetious manner, some by no means in faultless taste, have been directed against the careful observations of eminent scientific men with international reputations by those with no scientific training and no reputation at all.

The anthropological problem—is it a reality? The question is one to which no final answer can yet be given. It is quite evident that Lombroso overstated his case, and that the theory as he understood it was not justified by the facts which he himself compiled with so much care and industry. In its modified form, it is consistent with related theories in biology and eugenics. Very cautiously the anthropologist and the biologist have classified first races and then groups of those races into types. The murderer, a type of criminal whom Ferri has studied carefully, will serve as an example. Science can very approximately indicate among varying types of individuals those who under stress might commit murder and those who would come but hardly to commit murder in any circumstances. But it would be quite incorrect to suppose that any final appeal could be made to anthropology alone. The biologist will rightly demand a hearing. Nutrition has a profound effect upon the metabolism of the

brain, and it is literally true that a consistent and ill-advised change in diet might make a peaceful man a murderer. The contents of the skull, not the skull itself, is the ultimate arbiter of our destiny. But to correlate these two apparently distinct ideas, the food we absorb before birth will certainly influence the brain, and conceivably the skull, its tabernacle.

The observed facts do not justify more definite a statement than this, but they do dispose of a good deal of ill-informed criticism quite as prejudiced as anything advanced in favour of the theories of criminal anthropology.

It is, of course, generally possible for the expert anthropologist to reconstruct the features from the skull. Plasticine is commonly used for this purpose, and in a large number of instances the dead have been recognized after such a reconstruction has been made. The classic example is that of Lilian White, whose skull was discovered at Haverstraw in the State of New York. Mr. Grant Williams of the New York Police, after examination of the skull, pronounced it to be one of a Polish-Irish girl, bad tempered and mentally deficient. Mr. Williams knew nothing at the time of the identity of the skull. He reconstructed the features with plasticine and the head was immediately recognized by the medical officer of an Institution for the mentally defective in

the neighbourhood as that of a very troublesome patient who had escaped some time before.

Evidence of this kind makes it clear that investigations in the realm of criminal anthropology are in infancy rather than in decline.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM

If Lombroso was the father of the anthropological theory of the criminal, Tarde was responsible for the psychological theory. He was among the great Italian's most strenuous opponents, and yet without Lombroso he would probably never have elaborated the theory to the extent he did. Out of sheer exasperation he was moved to retort. And for another reason. No discussion of criminology is complete without an allusion to Lombroso. The question is not if his theory is true or false. There is one sense in which it will always remain profoundly significant. Lombroso was among the first to recognize that the criminal stood apart from the normal man forming a class by himself. The unreasonable opposition to him—a good deal of the opposition *was* unreasonable—took this ground. It outraged the feelings of the respectable to be told, as it were by implication, that criminality was a matter for the scientific rather than for the moral lecturer.

Tarde was too cautious for that. He opposed Lombroso on the ground that he had not proved his case, but he was prepared to admit that psychologically criminals might perhaps be classed by themselves. He went further. This hard-headed *juge d'instruction* was among the first to advance the theory of the professional criminal, and to suggest that other professions might be divided into distinct classes :

Si l'on essayait sur des centaines ou des milliers de juges, d'avocats, de laboureurs, de musiciens, pris au hasard et en divers pays, une série de mesures et d'expériences crâniométriques, algométriques, sphymographiques, graphologiques, photographiques, etc., analogues à celles de Lombroso, sur des centaines ou des milliers de criminels, il est extrêmement probable qu'on arriverait à constater des faits non moins surprenants ; à savoir, par exemple, que les avocats en général, principalement les avocats distingués, les *avocats nés* en quelque sorte,—faisant pendant aux *criminels nés*, et nés pour défendre ceux-ci . . . (*La Criminalité comparée*. Paris, 1902.)

This passage has often been taken literally. Alienists are sometimes deficient in a sense of humour. Tarde was not ; it is but another thrust at Lombroso. A little later he warms to his work :

. . . que leur sensibilité à la douleur, au froid, à la lumière, aux variations électriques, à son degré propre, général et permanent jusqu'à un certain point ; qu'ils sont plus impressionnés par la cue d'un bon verre de vin que par celle d'une jolie femme, ou vice versa. . . .

Many a true word is nevertheless spoken in jest, and despite the fact that Tarde could not leave Lombroso alone, he was inclined to support, from another point of view, the theory of the criminal type.

It is from such sly hints that the psychological theory of the criminal has evolved. Since the beginning of the twentieth century criminal psychology has been made the object of continued observation and experiment. In some quarters, the view persists that the criminal problem is merely one of wrongdoing which the law punishes as by some divine right, but it cannot long resist the array of facts which show that the problem is not so simple as that.

The affair of Marie Schneider is one which well illustrates the case for what was then called the instinctive criminal.

In 1886 at the age of twelve years this girl was brought before the Criminal Court of Berlin charged with the wilful murder of Margarete Dietrich, a child of three and a half years old.

The circumstances were that the girl deliberately pushed the child from a second-story window so that she was killed by the fall. Such things have occurred before in circumstances which have shown that those concerned were not fully aware of the nature or quality of their act. It is a well-established fact that quite



normal children will, when angry, commit what would be in adults crimes of violence if not properly controlled. There is nothing abnormal in that. Marie Schneider's crime allows of no such charitable interpretation. The murder was deliberate, premeditated, and planned. She desired Grete Dietrich's ear-rings in order to sell them and buy sweets. She explained in a quiet even voice and with great precision to the horrified judge how she had met Grete Dietrich in the road and had led the child to the yard of her parents' house. Having first taken the child up the stairs she left her there to visit the lavatory in the yard. Afterwards Marie explained that she had taken her up to the second-floor window and placed her on the ledge with her feet hanging over. She then pulled at the ear-rings, making the child cry. The girl threatened to throw the child out if she was not quiet. She took the ear-rings and put them in her pocket. Then, giving the child a push, she waited to hear her strike the lamp-post and then the pavement. Afterwards Marie departed on an errand for her mother. The motive for the murder was clear in her mind :

"I wanted to kill her," she said, "because I was afraid that she would betray me." And then later, "I knew that I should kill the child. I did not reflect that little Grete's parents would be sorry. It did not hurt me ; I was not sorry ;

I was not sorry all the time I was in prison ; I am not sorry now."

These are Marie Schneider's own words. Spoken as quietly as if she were reciting a lesson.

The whole recital bears the stamp of the unnatural and the monstrous, and the more so since the child was well-spoken and behaved, and of normal appearance. She was reported as absolutely sane and indeed to have intelligence in advance of her years. There was, however, no evidence of abnormal precocity. The girl confessed to being deliberately lazy at school. She hated discipline. Her association with a girl much older than herself possibly with unnatural sexual inclinations (but this was not proved) was the only evidence of abnormality in any formal sense.

The Court found, and rightly, that she was fully aware of the nature and quality of her act, and Marie Schneider was condemned to eight years' imprisonment.

It is necessary to proceed carefully in considering a case of this kind. It may, however, be said at once that there is a good deal to be said for painless extermination in such circumstances. A mentality such as this, apparently a complete moral insensibility, is a menace to the community. The psychology of such cases requires more attention. There is moral in-

sensibility, but not indifference. The girl desired her sweets fiercely enough to commit murder to get them. Underneath there is something more. The rebel. The social unit that will not fit. There is direct evidence of this. Her behaviour at school; her expression—it changed but once during her examination, when she spoke of the prison and the dry bread given her to eat; her dislike of her sister; her occasional aimless brutality to children and animals. Throughout the whole statement made by this child of twelve years old in full possession of her faculties there is not once a hint of fear. But there is an overwhelming suggestion throughout of suppressed hatred.

The other aspect of the problem is of great importance to the thesis in hand. Marie Schneider possessed characteristics which might have carried her far. Intelligence, courage, coolness, ruthless determination. Even at this early stage it must be borne in mind that the problem to be presented has a dual aspect.

Quite such perfect examples of undiluted criminality are rare, but there is another in the more recent case of Peter Kuerten, the Dusseldorf Ripper.

This man openly confessed to a hatred of humanity and society, and explained with perfect lucidity that his motive for murder was

revenge upon humanity which had wronged him. In reply to a question of the examining magistrate at the preliminary inquiry as to whether he felt no remorse after murdering little children, he replied, "I slept more quietly than you." And no doubt he did. It was to him a relief to murder.

He had undoubtedly received bad treatment in the army which had embittered him, and he seems at all times to have been a man at variance with his neighbours. Kuerten was in other respects a criminal, since there had been many previous convictions against him for robbery. There is, however, no evidence at all that he was an habitual criminal in the formal sense. At the time of his arrest he was earning his living honestly as a mechanic. There were no complaints as to his work, and he seems to have preferred to gain his living honestly. Through fear, his wife betrayed him, but he seems to have been a normal and reasonably good husband. He probably stole in the same spirit and with the same motives that he murdered. In his own words, he "wanted to be revenged upon humanity."

He possessed that characteristic common to all criminals but particularly to murderers, the desire to be the central figure in his own drama. Kuerten dramatized his crimes in court, and analysed his motives and feelings at great length.

The man remained calm and self-possessed throughout the greater part of the trial, and he seems to have enjoyed the horror he inspired. He was entirely unmoved by the death sentence.

While awaiting execution he laughed and joked with his warders, the subject of his witticisms being his crimes. There seems never to have been a prisoner in Germany who inspired so much genuine disgust and horror. He was ultimately left to himself, the warders refusing even to play cards with him.

There is no question at all that in Peter Kuerten society is faced with an example of a definite criminal type. The individual wrestling with an organization to which it cannot adjust itself and which in consequence it hates. There is attempted resolution of the conflict and sublimation by acts of violence.

Our modern civilization, advancing quickly, tends to encourage the development of such psychological types. The trouble begins in a humiliating conviction of inferiority. Civilization moves too fast for an increasing number of the units that compose it. Subconsciously aware that the facilities at their disposal to arm them for the contest in an increasingly competitive world do not keep pace with the intensified competition, resentment is born early; a resentment which is the psychological basis of all crime.

This is well shown by the modern criminal problem of the United States. There the observer is faced with the unedifying spectacle of a criminal society within the structure of legitimate society itself; nor does there seem any immediate prospect of bringing its organized brigandage to an end. This is a step forward in criminal evolution. The organization of the anti-social against society and the law, with its own codes of equity and ethic.

Nor are indications lacking that something of the kind may develop in this country. I am indebted to a friend on the staff of the London County Council, for some information bearing upon this subject. He has quoted the case of a boy of fourteen years old who immediately upon leaving school developed criminal tendencies. They took the form of a more or less successful attempt to organize a gang of boys of his own age or younger, with the avowed purpose of committing theft. It is not impossible that there is here in embryo a prototype of the intelligent American gangster bent upon conducting his war against society on a large scale.

Thomas Wainewright supplies another excellent example of criminal psychology. Of an educated family, he was himself an essayist and critic of some ability, but he is remembered as a murderer and a forger. He was of extrava-

gant and luxurious habits, and at the age of thirty he forged documents by which he obtained £5,000. The forgeries remained undiscovered for twelve years. Later he married, lived thriftlessly, and ultimately removed by poison a girl whose life he had insured for £18,000. This led to inquiries and suspicions which caused him to take refuge in France. Here he lived for a time with a gentleman and his daughter. He persuaded the man to insure his life, and shortly afterwards the insured person died suddenly and mysteriously. There is little doubt that he was poisoned by Wainewright. After wandering in France for a time under an assumed name and gaining experience of the inside of a French prison he was induced to return to England by a trick. Arrested on landing and tried for forgery, Wainewright was sentenced to transportation for life. This man was not charged with murder, but there seems no doubt that he poisoned at least three people, and attempted the lives of several others for no better reason than that they excited his animosity. He actually boasted of his success as a poisoner after his trial and conviction. He was inordinately vain and regarded himself as out of reach of the ordinary judgment of humanity. A man who knew him well said of him that "he seemed to be possessed of an ingrained malignity of disposition which kept

him constantly on the very confines of murder, and he took a perverse pleasure in traducing persons who had befriended him."

There is even more definite evidence here than in the case of Marie Schneider of the instinctive criminal as this psychological type used to be called. Wainwright can be considered apart from his particular crimes. He was antisocial and criminal by inclination and *sui generis*, and the crimes he actually committed are incidental. But he was not insane. On the contrary, although his literary remains are not of outstanding merit, he had considerable talent of a sort. Here we shall introduce a consideration which will be of very great importance hereafter. Had his "ingrained malignity of disposition" found a more thoroughgoing outlet in literary activity instead of in forgery and poisoning, Wainwright might have been a great literary figure.

In greatness there is always something of the monstrous. Swift was malignant, quarrelsome, proud and antisocial, but he produced great literature because and not in spite of these characteristics.

That is the basis of the psychological problem. There is a sense in which every man in the struggle to realize himself as an individual will hate the society of which he is compelled to form a part. In this sense all men and women



are potential criminals.<sup>1</sup> The French detective was quite right. To generalize as much as possible, that is the difference between the normal and the abnormal individual. Power is not given to all alike to reconcile the egoistic and the altruistic principles. Sir Walter Raleigh has put it well:

I wish I loved the Human Race ;  
I wish I loved its silly face ;  
I wish I liked the way it walks ;  
I wish I liked the way it talks ;  
And when I'm introduced to one  
I wish I thought *What Jolly Fun !*

The normal man capitulates ; but it is at best only a truce which all break in secret in one way or another. The common outlets are drink, fighting—which modern civilization has ingeniously converted into sport—or consorting with prostitutes. These are in their essence antisocial acts—sport being the sublimation of one—which society winks at because it can partially control them. These things are material evidence all the same that man does not really love his neighbour and society, and will set them at defiance if he can.

The abnormal man—the generalization is maintained since other than criminals have later to be considered—resolves his conflict

<sup>1</sup> All criminalists recognize two classes of criminals. Occasional criminals are not necessarily of the criminal type.

differently. He cannot capitulate, being unable or unwilling to pay the price which society demands. A number of interesting things may happen in these circumstances, of which the production of the criminal man is only one. To consider the criminal case, however, there will be at one end the unfortunate individual who cannot resolve the conflict at all—the criminal lunatic who, unrestrained, will indulge his passion for murder—and at the other end the pickpocket who loves society no better, but who suffers it gladly since it has pockets to pick. A vision of Villon, that unique synthesis of gaiety and hatred, rises before us.

Rebels. The exposition is hardly finished yet. The tendency for crime to ally itself with anarchy has frequently been remarked. It is true, as Havelock Ellis and J. C. Goodwin have observed, that it is often used by criminals as a cloak, but it is also true that those who subsist by crime have sometimes genuinely held anarchist principles. Anarchy is indeed the next step in the psychological ladder. Such men are half visionary, half criminal, but they are certainly actuated by a hatred of society. A new element, however, enters into the complex: the conscious desire for power. The criminal hates the social order, but he has no desire to destroy it. Society is indeed often his means of livelihood. The criminality of

the anarchist is upon altogether a different plane. He seeks, as does the criminal, an unorthodox escape from conflict, but by a bold inversion he makes society itself the author of all evil and desires a state of things where "there is no king and every man does that which is right in his eyes." It is interesting to notice here that in the majority of cases criminals appear genuinely to believe that it is society which is really the criminal. Lombroso quotes numberless cases in the form of sayings and prison inscriptions. "I am imprisoned for stealing half a dozen eggs; Ministers who rob millions every day are honoured. Poor Italy."

There is again a cynical verse of Lacenaire quoted by Havelock Ellis:

Buvons à la sagesse,  
A la vertu qui soutient !  
Tu peux sans crainte d'ivresse  
Bois à tous les gens de bien.

But the desire for power—the emergence of this element gives a new turn to the psychological drama. The converse has to be considered in this regard: the conviction of inferiority; the same which the new psychology calls the "Inferiority Complex." There is much vulgar mishandling of this expression which means essentially the unsuccessful struggle of

the imperfectly adjusted unit to come to terms with environment. The resultant of this conflict will be a sense of inferiority which may be entirely illusory. There is not necessarily any question of inferiority in the literal sense. Such a condition may be indeed the impediment of the noblest minds. This consideration is vital. There begins, in this connexion, to emerge a new aspect of the criminal problem altogether, but it is one which it is premature to discuss here.

The Inferiority Complex, however, in the legitimate sense in which the term is used, does give rise to the desire for power. That is the direction of its sublimation. The individual manifestation will be the revolutionary or the revivalist.

A good example is to be found in the extraordinary affair of David Lazzareti quoted by Lombroso (*The Man of Genius*). He was born in 1834, his father being a carter given to drink and of great strength. There was a history of insanity. The boy was good looking and of superior intelligence. It is asserted that he was hypospadiac and probably impotent in his youth. He was temperamental and unstable, first wishing to become a monk but later on giving himself up to alcoholic excess. Cultivating his mind, however, by reading Dante and Tasso, he showed at fifteen some poetic ability,

but was quarrelsome and given to obscene language.

He was definitely ambitious. At the age of twenty-five he joined the army. Before starting on Cialdini's campaign in 1860 he composed a patriotic hymn. Some of the verses were of great beauty and novelty of expression, but the hymn was rough in phraseology and contained serious grammatical errors.

In 1867 he developed religious hallucinations. He claimed to have seen a vision of the Madonna who commanded him to go to Rome and explain his divine mission to the Pope. The Pope received him kindly, but gave him the sound and common-sense advice to take shower-baths.

Lazzareti afterwards disappeared into the Sabine mountains and lived with a Prussian hermit who apparently gave him some theological instruction. The hermit seems to have assisted him to make tattoo marks on his forehead in the form of a cross. He afterwards claimed that these marks were miraculous stigmata impressed upon him by the hand of S. Peter.

A remarkable change then took place in him. From being quarrelsome and violent, he became gentle; from excess he turned to asceticism. More remarkable still was the improvement in his literary technique. Lazzareti had always

written plays and verse which were never deficient in a certain rude strength and beauty, but his work was disorderly, and of the nature of burlesque. He now produced work often of great refinement which remained always vigorous and effective.

He began to preach and drew large crowds, for his oratory was as forceful as his writings.

In 1870 he founded the Society of the Holy League and in 1873 the Order of the Penitent Hermits. There is no question but that Lazzareti was a remarkable personality, and that he acquired a certain ability for organization. His Society and Order attracted a very large following. The Italian Government became nervous and he was twice arrested for preaching sedition. The experts retained by the court at Rieti pronounced him sane, but this decision was reversed at the Court of Appeal at Perugia and he was released.

He entertained delusions of grandeur, and as a New Messiah began to preach against the errors of the Catholic Church. His attacks were a curious mixture of the muddled and incoherent, and the acute and the shrewd. In August of 1878 he organized a great procession numbering thousands, which marched from Montelabro towards Arcidosso. Lazzareti was robed in a purple cloak embroidered with gold and crowned with a tiara. The members of

his order were also richly dressed. The procession went forward with banners embroidered with the device, "The Republic is the Kingdom of God," and singing the Davidian hymn of his own composition. The Government was seriously alarmed, and prepared to meet what it thought might be an insurrection with armed force. There was no display of violence and it was afterwards discovered that none of Lazzareti's followers was armed. The incident, however, ended tragically for Lazzareti. He was killed by a shot fired by order of a delegate who had often been his guest. His dying words are said to have been, "The victory is ours."

. This strange figure had many qualities which demand our respect. Lazzareti is an excellent example of the psychology of inferiority, rendered acute by unsatisfactory environment and setting up conflict in aggravated form. First is to be observed quarrelsomeness and violence, the criminal line of escape. The writing of grandiose verses and tragedies follows; the escape through art. There is restless change of occupation from carter to soldier and then back to carter; and then asceticism, gentleness, religion, a refining process surprisingly manifested in his literary work. The revolt against the social order is turned inwards, presently to emerge as the will to be powerful as a new prophet, priest, and king.

That is in brief outline the psychological problem. Perhaps some sort of apology is necessary for having used throughout the extreme case by way of illustration. But if the illustrations are extreme, they are also typical.

A clear distinction has at least been drawn between the normal and the criminal man, for it is important to insist that the criminal man is not normal. It is a matter of intensity of conflict, of adjustment to environment. In the normal man it is short-lived. There is the sharp but brief if sometimes terrible conflict of adolescence ; the inevitable adjustment follows, and the conflict, while it remains—for mercifully we have not yet evolved the perfect social unit—is well in hand. The criminal is quite different ; socially he remains adolescent. This is a conclusion of some importance. When the stupidity of the criminal is remarked it ought to be defined as social stupidity. The cleverest criminal does appear at times to do the most foolish things. This fact is due to inability to understand the psychology of the normal social being.

A further step has been ventured. An endeavour has been made to show that anarchism, revolutionary activity even in its altruistic manifestation, and revivalist zeal are other branches springing from the same



abnormal stem. The conflict is accentuated and therefore the sense of inferiority. But there is a striving towards permanent sublimation, a strong urge to be rid of the inferiority, a will to be powerful. Generally the warrior on this psychological battlefield fails, but sometimes he succeeds.

If he succeeds? In such a case the question is no longer one of criminality, at least not one of criminality in *him*. Revolutions are directed by those who themselves have ceased to be revolutionaries. They have passed through the criminal phase, perhaps the anarchistical, certainly the revolutionary. There is indeed a transference upon the normally social and respectable in whom the conflict, suddenly intensified, breaks its bounds and seeks sublimation in acts of murder, theft, and rape.

The French Revolution is a type of all others. We have seen in our own day a similar phenomenon in Russia. The true revolutionary divines this and will deny that such a thing as a peaceful revolution is possible. And he knows. He has himself too close an acquaintance with conflict to have any doubts about that.

Revolution is a collective criminality. A social organization which increases in complexity too rapidly for the units which compose it will sooner or later be disrupted. It is

worth noting that there will be no outbreak unless the vision, real or illusory, of some new order provides an excuse for it. But it is only an excuse. The tension between the individual and society increases as the complexity of society, and its demand upon the individual, increases. He will seek means to a more direct sublimation in disorder and riot.

## THE GENIUS TYPE

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM

IT is impossible to consider the psychological problem without first a willingness to search for some sort of criterion by which genius can be judged. Often it may be fairly easy to decide if a man has a genius for this or that, but to decide if a man *is* a genius—that is another question.

Already the dictionary definition is far behind, or such a one as Carlyle's, the well-worn "Infinite capacity for taking pains." If this can be called a definition at all, it is a very unsatisfactory one.

Professor Cesare Lombroso, in writing *The Man of Genius*, made a contribution to psychology and psychiatry of classical importance, but his book nevertheless suffers from two fundamental defects. His inordinate passion for statistics, amongst which no attempt at selection appears to have been made, is most bewildering to the reader. Out of the mass of admittedly interesting data that he supplies, some sort of definition of genius is left to

scramble. Lombroso gives an account, always diverting but sometimes tragic, of the abnormalities of eminent men with great talent in philosophy, science, or art, but he has tended to choose those who combined with unusual talent eccentricity of one kind or another with very little regard as to whether they could in fact be described as geniuses or not. The confusion in the reader's mind is thus augmented.

Yet fundamentally Lombroso's verdict upon the genius was correct, as he was probably fundamentally correct about the criminal. His conclusions are to the effect that the genius lies somewhere between the insane and the criminal. But he must not be misunderstood. Lombroso was no mere scientific pedant. With one of the flashes of insight which illuminate almost every page that he wrote, he makes it clear that genius, if allied to insanity and crime, is in its essence distinct from both.

It is quite true that individuals sometimes develop abnormally great talent in one direction at the expense of others. The assertion has also been made that an autopsy upon the brain reveals development of a particular part of it to an unusual degree. This, I think, has never been proved. Different regions of the brain are associated in general with particular faculties, but only in a general and not in a specialized sense. Nor would this evidence be, even if

accurate, of much assistance. The development of a particular faculty in a high degree does not constitute genius. It is a remarkable fact that idiots occasionally possess a super-normal memory, and reveal sometimes amazing mechanical ability. To apply this illustration to genius is hardly a legitimate *reductio ad absurdum*, but it does indicate that the proposition must be accepted with caution. It might be said of the idiot with exceptional memory that he had a genius for remembering things, or of the man with one highly developed talent that he had genius in that particular direction, but even popular opinion—not too sound a guide in these cases—demands more of a genius than superabundant talent. What it demands it may not be able to define, but it is certainly something more than this.

Exactly the same difficulty, in fact, has often arisen to discussing the criminal man. It is necessary to have some theory about him; a formula that will cover a type, not one that will have to wrestle with every individual case. The criminal has been dealt with and an endeavour made to show that criminality depends upon the individual's relation to society, as distinct from whether or not that individual has been in gaol. The theory may be wrong, but it appears to explain the facts, and those who disagree with it must find a better if they

can. Lombroso's conclusions necessarily imply that there is a genius type set apart from the normal type, and that an individual may belong to this category without having been recognized as a genius at all.

The consideration of genius as a psychological type begins where that of the criminal leaves off. It may, however, as well be said at once that the genius and the criminal type are fundamentally one and the same thing. This is not an original opinion. It has been endorsed for thousands of years by society itself. Society punishes the genius while he lives, even if its laws do not permit it to put him in gaol or execute him. On occasion, however, society has succeeded in doing both. There are few exceptions to this. It is further inevitable, for society acts upon the instinct of self-preservation as it does with the criminal. *Par excellence* the genius is the enemy of society ; probably of all society, certainly of any but that of his own making.

Friedrich Nietzsche's superman was converted by popular opinion into a super-criminal or super-maniac. As so often happens, popular opinion was literally right, but in effect quite wrong, because it used the word criminal at once in too loose and too literal a sense.

This man, himself a genius, was undoubtedly the greatest psychologist of the nineteenth

century. His whole philosophical system is, in fact, an exposition of psychology. He anticipated in all essentials the modern schools, Freud, Junge, and Adler, a fact which all of them directly or indirectly have generously admitted.

His whole philosophy of the will to power to which such unreasonable exception has been taken is nothing more than a sober statement of the natural law that man does in fact strive to realize a condition of maximum efficiency. It is an illustration of the conflict that prevails in nature. Man has invented a new conflict of his own. Being the social animal, much of the conflict has, by the restraint imposed by social organization, been turned inwards. That is man's conscience, his "bad conscience."

This is modern psychology pure and simple, or rather perhaps a brilliant restatement and synthesis of fundamental psychological fact. Modern psychology is new only in its method of approach.

The question of conflict and its results has been considered. It is this same conflict which is the core of Nietzsche's system. It has given rise to many of those of his maxims which have been most condemned and misunderstood :

Ye say that it is a good cause that halloweth even war ?  
I say unto you it is a good war that halloweth every cause.  
(*Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Part 1.)

Nietzsche romantically exaggerates a little. He is rhetorical and dramatic. He has a habit of joking slyly when one expects him to be most serious; but he is always profound and great. To him the conflict is very real and of sublime magnitude. The battleground is man's social environment, the warrior is man with his desire to live fully and freely. The rush and pressure of the battle run through all that he wrote like a mighty wind.

The problem he treats of, from start to finish, is the problem of the genius, of the beyond-man. And it is from our point of view—as indeed it was from his—a criminal problem, although he does not use the word criminal himself in this connexion. His type is one in which the conflict is acute. It is a social misfit because it envisages something beyond society, some condition in which man lives and does not merely exist within the social beehive. He stresses the difficulties and dangers to which such men may fall an easy prey, and how if they fail their last estate is worse than their first. In fact, to ignore society is to be a criminal; to fail to rise high enough to be able, in your own strength, to ignore it will ultimately mean that you will act like one.

Over and over again Nietzsche the psychologist makes this point clear.



Like some last hint pointing to the *other* road appeared Napoleon, that most isolated and latest born of man that ever was, and in him appeared the incarnate problem of the *noble ideal as such*. Let it be well considered what kind of problem this is: Napoleon, this synthesis of monster and beyond-man. . . . (*The Genealogy of Morals*, First Essay, 16.)

Stripped of its drama and rhetoric, this means that Napoleon as a type of genius (and none, I suppose, would deny him that title) tried for the highest and most unfettered sphere of being and failed, if only by a little, to get there.

In one of his aphorisms he places the whole question in even more compact a nutshell:

May we not suppose the future criminal dictating his own punishment, secure in the sense that he has made his own law?

If there is yet any doubt that Nietzsche with his profound insight had caught the essential, the vital connexion between the genius and the criminal, it ought to be dispelled by this aphorism. He is as usual with a half of himself laughing at you, and on the other hand, through the very medium of that laughter, driving home the keen shaft of truth to the very hilt. As he said himself, he did not believe in truths which had not laughter in them.

With the theory that the genius is an exaggerated type of specialist he will have nothing to do. Nietzsche showed, perhaps, his deepest

insight in his contempt for this popular view of genius. The "men who have nothing more than a big eye, or a big mouth, or a big belly, or something else big" (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*), these were men whom the world sometimes called big men and geniuses; to him they were "reversed cripples."

For Nietzsche, the ideal type of genius had not yet emerged. Nothing is more curious than the popular view and even that of some critics—who should have known better—concerning Nietzsche's supposed megalomania. He saw far ahead; his study of mankind made him believe that man's evolution far from being finished was only begun. He indicates what the steps in that evolution might be. He saw a vision of the beyond-man; but it was a vision of the future none had attained, certainly not Nietzsche himself.

He had a profound respect for the Founder of Christianity. His atheism is more apparent than real. But he hated that type of religion which he regarded as the popular type, and he was right, which made people worship something with long ears. Of Christ he said:

Never yet Superman existed. . . . Verily, even the greatest one I found to be—all too human. (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*.)

Perhaps some apology or at least some explanation is necessary for this dwelling upon

the Nietzschean system. It is, however, of first-rate importance. Nietzsche was a genius discussing the psychology of genius as no other man has ever yet done. He had a profound understanding, also, of the relation of man the individual to society, the unique conditions under which the animal man has developed, and which has made possible the emergence of the genius, and the related product, the criminal.

His view of society closely corresponds to our own. That this is not immediately evident arises from the fact that besides being a philosopher he was a poet and an artist. To him the conflict between the individual and society assumed the dimensions of a Greek tragedy. And why should it not? It is, after all, a great theme. Further, as a psychologist he was preoccupied with the individual and the type, and less with the aggregate, society.

Adler and Freud have borrowed freely from Nietzsche. That which Nietzsche called the "will to power" Adler has called the "wish for superiority," the libido which urges the whole organic world in its struggle for adjustment to environment or the seeking for a new one. This urge is instinctive, or unconscious as modern psychology has it, but to justify this urge the rather confused conscious mind invents some fictitious aim to strive for. This also is good Nietzschean doctrine, but only up to a

point. Adler and Freud would defend the fictitious aim as necessary. Nietzsche, less concerned with the practical problem of society, traces the great note of interrogation. Why, if you know the aim is fictitious, should you trouble about this fictitious aim at all? The more excellent, if the more dangerous way, is to strive to find a real one if you can.

Modern psychology is quite clear about this. There is society. The fictitious aim will keep the individual within the law. Again Nietzsche would have agreed that this was desirable for the ordinary man, but not for him of super-abundant talent. Quite logically he defends this view. The progress of society depends upon it. If the law were never broken the law of yesterday would prevail for ever, and man would be no better than his ancestor, the *Pithecanthropus erectus* which failed, and so, miserably perished.

Here is the whole of the law and the prophets as far as it relates to genius. It will be obvious at once that it is but a razor-edge which divides the man of genius from the criminal man. It might be argued, of course, that there is a profound difference between consciously preying upon society in order to live, and a conscious striving in search of a new and better law. But there is a great difficulty. The striving is not necessarily conscious. The criminal no more

consciously preys upon society than does the genius consciously strive to evolve a new law. Each in his own way is a law unto himself. Nietzsche was quite alive to the difficulties of the theory, and he did not live to develop it in full, but the general trend is clear. He did not ask how good, or how social, how bad, or how criminal, a man was. The centre of importance was his greatness, the degree and strength of the life force manifested through him.

He regarded, for example, Cesare Borgia as a great man. Nietzsche would scarcely have defended his incestuous love for his sister. But this is hardly the point. Rather the question is, how great was the man? What weight of vital abundance, of nobility, courage, leadership, and political sagacity can be thrown on to the other side of the scales?

Nor is this view so novel and outrageous as some would have us believe. Even we men and women of the twentieth century tacitly admit, though we scarcely care to confess it, that on a last analysis things are permitted to a Prime Minister which if perpetrated by Mr. Jones would cause him to be ostracized in Streatham. A Prime Minister may not be a genius, but he is a greater man than Mr. Jones, and it is doubtful if even theoretically—and certainly not practically—the same criterion can be applied to him.

Nietzsche's aspect of the psychology of genius is of great importance because it avoids altogether the pathological question. That genius may be, and often is, a matter for the pathologist is quite true. It is important to remember, however, that professional men often wear blinkers and that psychiatrists are no exception. Solemnly to declare that Napoleon was abnormal, that at one period of his life he was probably impotent, that he had chorea, does not fully explain Napoleon. Nor is the dubious assumption that genius is a function of the glands of very much assistance to those who require something more than rather a shallow generalization.

The genius is abnormal, but it does remain to be argued if that abnormality is cause or effect. After all, the question as to whether he is a social misfit because he is abnormal, or abnormal because he is a social misfit, is as difficult a riddle as that of the egg and the hen.

On the whole, if there is to be generalization, the psychological is the surest ground. There is the conflict between the individual and society, the Reality and the Pleasure Principle. The normal man adjusts himself, the criminal tries and fails; the genius also tries and fails, but goes in search of a new harmony.

It is worth remarking that he does not

generally attain it. The geniuses of action never, even in achieving a measure of success; the geniuses of thought seldom. Lenin is a most excellent example of the criminal psychology developing through anarchy to revolutionary Marxism and Communism. This colossal figure partially resolved his conflict by turning a whole civilization upside down, and endeavouring to begin over again. It is yet too early to decide if the vision of this genius—for Lenin was a genius however Communism is regarded—will be realized. But it does remain to add, and this is vital, that he envisaged what he described as a state of permanent revolution. The statement sounds absurd. It means nothing more than that Lenin's conflict was not finished with his first victory over environment. He saw in front a further conflict still. One must perhaps be a Lenin to have even an inkling of what that conflict was.

And Lenin is but a type of them all. Such freedom and harmony as the genius seeks is only to be bought at a great price. Condemned by society as criminals—corrupters of youth, has been a not infrequent charge—they may at last revolutionize society peacefully or otherwise only to find themselves recondemned by, or still out of harmony with, the new order. There is no case of admitted genius where the battle, in which the normal man so quickly and

with so much relief capitulates, is not waged until his life's end.

### FREUD AND THE GENIUS

Whatever ultimate verdict may be passed upon the modern psychological theories of Freud, Adler, and Junge, the importance of the fundamental concept cannot be denied. The conflict between the Reality and Pleasure Principles, or the Herd and the Egoistic Instincts, is very obvious a reality. There is no question at all that the wish to do or not to do something is not a simple impulse but the resultant of a complex of rudimentary instincts. It is the elaborated technique of the theory which is less readily accepted. The interpretation of dreams is regarded by many as lacking sufficient experimental confirmation, while some of Freud's nomenclature has been severely criticized. It has been objected that the expression Endo-psychic Censor, for instance, suggests an entity with functions apparently equivalent to those of the Lord Chamberlain. The objection is reasonable. The human mind is not a government department and it seems a pity to employ a nomenclature which should give critics an opportunity of suggesting that Freud thinks it is.

It is, however, in connexion with Freud's theory of sex that so many critics have lashed



themselves into a condition of such unreasonable indignation. As in the case of Lombroso, opponents have forgotten Freud's theory, if they ever understood it, in an orgy of denunciation and have condemned their own interpretation of it. Freud is very easy to misunderstand. One of his recent books does seem to invite the interpretation that a conversation between any man or woman on so harmless a subject as the weather does not mean at all what it appears to mean, and may result in consequences not usually associated with casual and polite conversation.

However this may be, Freud's theory of sex is not at all as some critics pretend. He might indeed with justice retort that the critics and not he were wallowing in the mire. His mind, essentially lofty, rejects the view of sex still unhappily too prevalent in Europe; the view that there is something intrinsically nasty about it. Such criticism has corrupt roots, and those who voice it may well be reminded that the Classical civilizations worshipped the Phallus as the symbol of Life, and that this religion was basically sounder and more truthful than much which is preached from the pulpits of Europe to-day.

The Freudian theory of sex is the common-sense but at the same time the lofty one that it is the means of man's continuity, and there-

fore the only guarantee of immortality for the race since man is assured of none for the individual. Sex is the libido, the will to live, the will to power. The two other primary instincts of feeding and fighting are subordinate and minister to the instinct of sex. It is thus obvious that by sex Freud means something much more than the mere gain of pleasure and the gratification of the sexual impulse. The view, however, is not a novelty. It was the commonplace of Greece and Rome. There is no doubt at all that the strangely distorted views of sex which belonged to medieval Europe and persist even to this day would greatly have astonished the average Greek or Roman citizen, and have astonished many with classical ideals since that time.

Over against the impulses of feeding, fighting, and sex is set the Herd Instinct, which impresses upon man as a necessity what was originally the unnatural condition of living in community with other men. A conflict which never ceases is thus set up between the Pleasure Principle (egoistic) and the Reality Principle (social).

It is here that modern psychology tends to separate from classical systems. For Freud the instincts determine the mental processes, and all man's desires and ideals, however elevated. Mind is not something which separates man from other animals; mind is rather the expres-

sion of more complex because more conflicting instincts. The will to live and the will to gain power over life, the striving for maximum conditions of efficiency is at the root of everything.

It is at this point and beyond that the debatable ground is entered. Upon this basis is built up the theory of the Unconscious, the Subconscious, and the Conscious Mind. The various Complexes are defined; the psychology of dreams explained, not always very plausibly; the technique of word associations, and so on. The theory becomes immensely complicated and, to say the least of it, some of the conclusions are scientifically very dubious. On the whole, however, experience will probably confirm most of Freud's essentials.

It is interesting, in any case, to consider the genius in the light of Freud's theory. Its particular advantage is that it is capable of wide generalization. Freud does not recognize any fundamental distinction between the normal and the abnormal mind. Its conclusions are alike applicable to the normal, the criminal, the genius, and the insane.

A brief allusion has already been made to the Inferiority Complex. It was made clear that in the terms of modern psychology the word inferiority is not used in a literal sense. It means maladjustment to environment. This point is of interest. Suppose that maladjust-

ment to environment is due to superiority? The difficulty remains, of course, that the criterion is obscured. The question will be determined by the popular equation, Difference = Inferiority. The individual, conscious of this difference and so of augmented conflict, may interpret his discomfort as actual inferiority. It may appear as coldness or indifference, as self-assertion, or in the desire for solitude. Again, the individual may actually appear to be inferior to those around him. Feeling the tension, he is nervous and high-strung. He will make mistakes, appear doubtful about everything, and behave tactlessly; he may be distressingly shy. The crowd thinks him a fool and draws its conclusions; he has a neurosis. And the crowd from its own point of view is right.

Underneath, however, the superior man, at least as he develops, realizes his superiority. He dislikes and despises the popular point of view. This, however, will not help him with his conflict; it only increases it. The conclusion is fairly obvious. Like the criminal the superior man will inevitably be antisocial.

Freud has not concerned himself particularly with the genius, but this is a fair statement in terms of modern psychology of the problem of genius and its relation to the Reality Principle. It is perhaps of some importance to reassert

here that the type of genius to be considered is that with a superabundance of talents, psychical and emotional, and not the individual with the monstrous exaggeration of one. In other words, the type in whom every element of the vital force is instinct in exceptional fullness is the real or potential genius.

Like the normal man, however, the genius will endeavour to sublimate his conflict. The sublimation will take form of expression in the direction of his chosen talent, art, literature, science, politics.

The intensity of his preoccupation will be a measure of the acuteness of the conflict. Whatever form the sublimation takes there will be in it a great agony of striving. The art, literature, science, or politics are universalized, mere instruments by which the genius strives to bend life and society to his will. Richelieu and Cecil Rhodes were something more than administrators, and Buonarrotti transcended his medium, sculpture. Napoleon was not a great soldier only.

The dangerous and the criminal aspect of genius is that it is inevitably thwarted. It is the greatest enemy of society, and in consequence it is society's method to destroy the genius first and adopt his criminal theories afterwards. Occasionally, however, the genius destroys society. Napoleon made Europe a

shambles, and Lenin's victory left Russia starved and bleeding. Voltaire is said, perhaps unjustly, to have been responsible for the French Revolution; his biting pen certainly shook the old order to its foundations so that it was the more easily overthrown. It is ridiculous to regard genius as good or evil; although in its effects it may be the one or the other, essentially it is beyond such relative categories. Genius cares nothing for such things; it strives as does the normal being to resolve its conflict. The difficulty is that its travail may be so vast that a good deal of real or apparent damage is done in the process.

The most interesting aspect of the question remains to be considered more fully. That is the psychology of genius as such, the mind of the genius as distinct from its attainments. In this direction the Freudian school is of very definite assistance, and it is impossible to ignore its experiments and the conclusions it has arrived at.

Freud has defined the artist as the individual who will not face the Reality Principle because it comes into too violent collision with his erotic and ambitious wishes. He takes refuge in a word of phantasy, in a symbolical expression of impulses which society will not allow him to satisfy directly. He can thus imagine himself as a hero or king, or a creator.

This is enlightening and certainly true of all artists.

Dr. Oskar Pfister describes a very interesting case of psycho-analysis which he carried out upon an artist. (Pfister, *The Psycho-analytic Method*.) The patient was a young man of eighteen years of age, described as Franz J. His family was religious, but the boy, who was very intelligent, had adopted freer and more agnostic views. Signs of nervous disturbance began to show themselves some eighteen months after Dr. Pfister's first acquaintance with Franz. His criticism of anything and everything became scornful and lacking in proportion. He later rejected all ethical values and yet complained of the lack of morality in his fellows. He confessed at the beginning of the analysis to being sick of life. The youth had fallen out with his parents and with most of his friends; and he seriously contemplated suicide at this time. The study of Nietzsche had destroyed his belief in religion and seemed to have given him no new values to live by.

The most important evidence, however, was supplied by his very striking artistic work, two examples of which are reproduced in this book by the courtesy of Dr. Pfister, who made a careful and elaborate analysis of the pictures in question and some others. Although very unpleasant, they are exceptional in conception and design

and indicate that Franz showed quite unusual promise.

In the analysis Franz explained that the heads hanging on the right of the picture were those of his father, mother, and younger sister. He frankly admitted that he hated all of them. Further, the heads were composite portraits. They represent not only the relations named, but characteristics are portrayed belonging to others whom the youth hated, a boy who struck him, and an untidy and immoral maid whom he disliked. The picture is a representation of the murder of them all. They are obviously portrayed as being beheaded, hanged, spitted (a spit runs through all the heads) and crucified. They are hypocritically religious, and the youth shows his scorn by the form of the cross above the heads.

Towards the centre of the picture at the top a heart oblique tilted forward has been drawn. This under the analysis the artist describes as being hard, iron-like, and wounded. It is the heart of his father.

There are other indications concerning the analysis of the accessories of the portrait indicating unnatural eroticism with roots in the Oedipus complex too elaborate to discuss here.

It is, however, of importance to note that the costume worn by the figure is that resembling a monk's. Franz is deeply impressed with the



idea of entering a monastery and entering through monasticism the Buddhist Nirvana. The costume is further that of the parricide in Schiller's *Tell*.

The disposition of the hand the artist interpreted under the analysis as relating to an act of onanism.

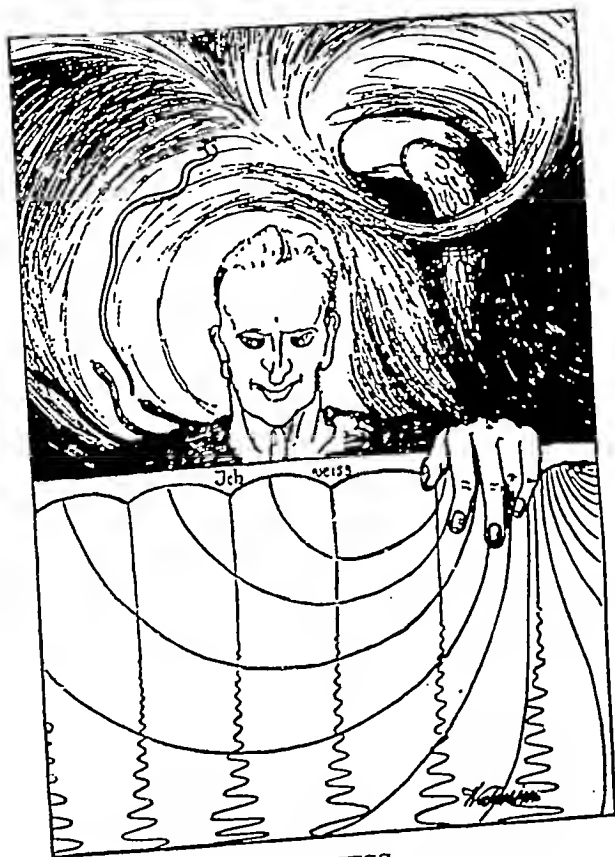
An iron rod from the chain falls and penetrates the figure's head. This suggests to him an act of violence against himself—suicide.

Dr. Pfister summarizes the contents of the picture as a representation of a criminal incestuous desire involving parricide and the murder of other relations. Repentance follows and the will to expiate by retirement into a cloister.

Some general observations of this analysis can be made.

The conclusion as to the violently antisocial nature of all the sentiments expressed by it is irresistible. One does not need to be a psychoanalyst to detect that. But the analysis makes it clearer still. There is hatred of the family, the basis of society, a desire for retirement from the world, onanism, always the resort of the introverted and the antisocial. Further, on the artist's own showing, the impulses which gave birth to the pictures are unmistakably criminal in the most literal and the gravest sense. The question at once arises: what would have happened to Franz had he not





## MADNESS

(By kind permission of Dr. O. Pfister and  
Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner.)

painted the portrait? Again the conclusion is irresistible that he would have probably committed murder and possibly attempted other crimes.

There is another incident which has a considerable bearing upon this question of the psychology of genius. Franz had visited a picture gallery with his father and sister a few days before painting the picture. There was an angry discussion in which he had maintained how disgraceful a thing it was that society first let the artist be ruined and then admired his work.

The second picture, "Madness," was inspired by the most unpleasant circumstances. An elderly man, unknown to the young artist, entertained unnatural affection for him. On the occasion when the picture was made he had attempted a homosexual attack. The youth repulsed the man with violence and there and then sat down and began the drawing without knowing what would come of it.

A more terribly truthful representation of insanity it is difficult to conceive, but it is obvious that the author himself is in grave danger of losing his reason. There has been an augmentation of introversion.

But the same elements are there; withdrawal from the world behind a curtain; the great hand holding together all the threads

which control the destiny of the world. The finger under the chin is interpreted as a symbol of onanism.

It is interesting to note, in praise of psycho-analysis, that Franz J. completely regained his peace of mind as a result of psycho-analytic treatment. Being convinced by Dr. Pfister of the source of his trouble he sought to free himself from it and apparently succeeded.

However this may be, such an example gives strong colour to the Freudian view of the artist. Art is the way of escape, and the artist paints, sculptures, or writes as he would not dare to live. Such was the confession made by Richard Wagner in one of his letters. Art is a substitute for life. Yet it is exactly at this point that the genius separates from the artist. He does dare to live according to his phantasies. The artist exclaims in effect, "Thus would I wish it"; the genius, "Thus shall it be." If society will not bend to him, he will bend society, if he can.

We are thus once more completely entangled in the problem of crime.

It is here of interest to remark in parenthesis that psycho-analysis, hardly yet admitted to the wide and yet select circle of the respectable, looks as if it might emerge as the champion of the plain man and of society. To make this assertion is to pose a question of some delicacy. To what extent is it really

desirable to endeavour, by scientific method, to make the abnormal normal? There does seem to be a real danger of standardizing the individual out of existence. And if it is true that the genius is abnormal, but the measure of a people's greatness is the measure of its geniuses, science may end by petrifying endeavour rather than encouraging it.

The trend and actual position of the argument is now perhaps more evident.

The ordinary man comes to terms with society. The artist cannot; the genius will not. Those who will not are, when all is said and done, actual or potential criminals. It is the aim of the genius, although it may not be more than subconscious, to overthrow society and rebuild it upon lines that would bring it into harmony with *him*. It is a more or less conscious manifestation in such examples as Napoleon, Nietzsche, and Lenin. The aim is less in evidence because less evident to the genius himself in many others. But through the work of art, the poem, the novel, the drama, the same direction of activity is indicated. Oscar Wilde, whose claim to genius is more than doubtful, once made a very profound remark. He observed that life followed art. The suggestion has been made that this means that life found art so excellent that it desired to model itself upon it. There is not complete evidence of this but there is

plenty that great art interprets life, as the artist comprehends it, and that it is the artist's aim, conscious or subconscious, through his art, to make his problem society's problem.

If society acquiesced in this there would be no problem of genius, criminal or otherwise. Obviously at this point while the genius retains in some aspects resemblance to the revolutionary he is out of the criminal orbit. Society, however, strives to maintain the *status quo*. There is thus augmented conflict and in consequence, let us be quite plain about it, hatred. It is in this connexion that the formal question of criminality enters: unnatural desires, unreasonable animosities, even violence and murder, theft and blackmail.

Yet this animosity is the soil of genius, for it is curiously manifested by the passion of the genius for examining and upholding opinions which society has rejected. It is hardly necessary to produce evidence. Genius is well known, in fact, for its often perverse tendency to support apparently absurd opinions. This is, however, the basis of all originality. Rejected opinions are not necessarily absurd.

It should now be fairly evident that although a definition of genius in a few words is impossible, that the considerations of this and the last chapter have made it clear that there is a case for the psychological problem of genius as

such. Classical and modern psychology are capable of explaining it in much the same terms. If it is possible at all to sum up the essentials of the matter in a few words, it might be said that the psychology of genius perhaps has its roots in what might be called—a kind of sublime hatred.





EXAMPLES  
THE CRIMINAL TREND



## A MEDIEVAL RAPSCALLION

IN the June of 1455, there were sitting outside the Mule Tavern in Paris a priest named Gilles, a woman, Ysabeau, probably a prostitute, and a third, François Villon. They were talking. Suddenly another approaches, also a priest, Philip Chermoye, with a companion. Chermoye, advancing threateningly, cries out, "Je regnie Dieu ! je vous ay trouve." The three witnesses, scenting trouble, beat a hasty retreat.

Chermoye whips out a knife and wounds Villon in the face. Villon also draws and stabs the priest in the groin. The aggressor falls and Villon takes to his heels.

Chermoye survived for a day or two, but ultimately died of the wound.

There is no reason to doubt that Villon acted in self-defence, and even to-day he could not have been indicted on a more serious charge than manslaughter, but there is some evidence which suggests that Villon, not satisfied with protecting himself, deliberately aimed to kill Chermoye. He seems to have been pardoned on account of the last words of his assailant

relating to the matter. They were to the effect that he forgave Villon and did not wish to be avenged. The cause of the enmity of the two men is not known, but it has been suggested that it was on account of the girl, Ysabeau. Nothing is more probable. Girls played a prominent part in François Villon's singularly graceless life.

Villon's criminality was something essential, his genius as a poet accidental. If the term is legitimate, he was a perfect example of the instinctive criminal. His speciality was, in fact, the confidence trick, in which he undoubtedly excelled. His poetry describes various forms of it in detail, and not without pride.

Et passeront par Nostre-Dame  
La ou il vit le Penancier,  
Qui confessoit homme ou bien femme

Quent il le vit a peu de plait,  
Il luy dit : Monsieur, je vous prie  
Que vous despediez, s'il vous plaist,  
Mon nepveu, car je vous affie  
Qu'il est en telle resverie :  
Vers Dieu il est fort negligent ;  
Il est en tel merencolie  
Qu'il ne parle rien que d'argent.

That is the story told by the trickster to the priest who sits in the cloisters to hear confessions. His "nephew," who thinks more of money than the love of God, desires to confess.

The nephew is, in fact, a porter carrying a basket of fish which Villon has ordered and promised to pay for on delivery.

The unsuspecting priest is, of course, willing to comply. Villon proceeds to tell the porter that there is someone in the cloisters who will pay him. The man puts down the basket of fish and goes to speak to him. The priest inquires regarding the confession, the porter concerning his money, thus seeming to bear out the uncle's words. In the resulting conflict of interest, and delay, Villon and the fish disappear.

It is quite as ingenious as many confidence tricks of to-day.

The method of obtaining wine is to go to the wine shop with two pitchers, one empty, the other containing water. The empty one is handed over to be filled, but an objection is then made that the wine is not of sufficiently good quality. The jar with the water is handed back to the cellarman to be refilled; while this is being done the trickster decamps.

Meat is stolen by the now well-known method of diversion. The thief enters the shop and bargains for a piece of meat. The accomplice then arrives and tries to outbid him. A quarrel begins. Blows are struck and the accomplice makes off, followed by the principal who, seiz-

ing the piece of meat in the general confusion, pursues him down the street.

These, however, were misdemeanours of his earlier days. The later crimes were those of burglary.

In the winter of 1456 five men appeared at the Mule Tavern and ordered supper. After supper, having sworn one of their members not fully in their confidence to secrecy, they proceeded stealthily in the direction of the College of Navarre. These men were François Villon, Colin de Cayeux, a monk named Nicholas, and a certain Petit-Jehan, a clever mechanic and picklock. The fifth, Guy Tabarie, who was the dupe, was set to watch in the street while the other four scaled the wall by means of a ladder and proceeded to break and enter the College.

They were absent about two hours, and on their return they counselled Tabarie under a threat of murder to say nothing of this nocturnal expedition. He was given ten crowns as his share in the night's work.

In spite of the threat this was Tabarie's evidence at the inquiry. He had obviously not been a principal in the affair, but he admitted his complicity and acceptance of the money.

This was but one of several well-planned and executed burglaries. Tabarie was a stupid and

loquacious person rather given to drink. A clever amateur detective in the person of the Prior of Perray succeeded in extracting much valuable information from him concerning other robberies. His method consisted in treating Guy Tabarie, and making him even more drunk and indiscreet than he habitually was. As a result he obtained important evidence regarding the burglary which had taken place a little earlier at the Augustinian convent in Paris. It was obvious to the Prior that the man was a member of the gang. He even succeeded in inducing him to point out the other members of it by feigning a wish to join himself.

A day or two later, Tabarie, frightened and sober, fled. Information had, of course, been laid against him and the Villon gang, but for the time being they escaped. Tabarie was arrested a year later and avoided the gallows only by an ace upon a promise to repay his share of the plunder. The reason for this clemency is not known, but it was probably thought that he might be of further use to the authorities.

It is a significant sidelight upon the detective methods of the time that the Prior did not stumble across the clue until the spring of the year following the burglary, proving that the authorities, if they had moved in the matter at all, had discovered nothing. Even with this



fresh evidence they did not succeed in laying hands upon Tabarie until the year after that. Upon Villon they did not lay hands at all, and his associates seem also to have escaped the consequences of this particular crime. Colin de Cayeux, that finished blackguard, was arrested some years later, tried for robbery with violence, aggravated assault, and rape, and hanged, but it was not until 1460 that he was taken.

Villon was at this time a member of the Coquillard, an organized army of robbers who presented a criminal problem different from any that exists to-day, although it resembles to some extent the gangster organization of the United States. The Coquillard was organized on military lines, since it numbered many discharged mercenaries in its ranks. It was a powerful and dangerous society with ramifications throughout France. Its headquarters were the brothels; its intelligence the prostitutes. The jargon in which so many of Villon's poems are written was its language. We shall return to this question later.

The burglary was followed by an uproarious feast. In this as in other directions Villon remains loyal to the orthodox criminal tradition. The wine flowed freely enough and his girl associates came in for their share of the spoils. The money was soon spent, and it was

not long before Villon left Paris for Angers. His object seems to have been to rob his uncle, a respectable ecclesiastic, resident in that town. The design came to nothing.

He was ever the instinctive enemy of society. In the course of his wandering he came to and was welcomed at the Court of Charles of Orleans. He remained for a time and received wages as one of the Duke's poets, for he was already recognized by the discerning as a man of great promise. But in a short space of time his patron and he became estranged. Villon's wages were stopped and he soon afterwards quitted the Court.

History repeated itself at the Court of the Duke of Bourbon, his second patron. The young Duke was greatly pleased with Villon's poetry, and the poet remained under his protection for a short time. There is no evidence of any quarrel, but it is not long before Villon again takes to the road.

We are not for the moment concerned with the underlying cause but only with the irresistible weight of evidence in support of the fact that he was a criminal of choice. There are indications that from time to time during his wanderings he endeavoured to earn his living honestly, which, being a Master of Arts of the University of Paris, he was well qualified to do. But he returned always to

crime, to burglary, petty pilfering, and no doubt to confidence tricks of all kinds, including the manipulation of cards and dice. In between times he roared, fought, and drank in inns and brothels. This, however, was an occupation not confined to the criminal classes, since it was not uncommon then for those highly placed in Church and State to take part in the orgies of the tavern. He was quite unable to keep clear of women, and again and again his poetry is the mirror of the fury of his sensuality intimately mixed with his disgust at it. The names are there of girls who were prostitutes, or in the alternative, others who had made no prolonged resistance to the advances he invariably made. Villon certainly had no love for any of them.

Mais qu'a la petite Macee  
D'Orleans, qui ot ma sainture,  
L'amende soit bien hault taxee :  
Elle est une mauvaise ordure.

This is but one of many. He had obviously visited a brothel where his belt and money had been taken; but to describe the girl Macee "la petite" as "mauvaise ordure" is pretty strong.

Prior to his sojourn in the Bourbon Court he had been in trouble at Bourges. The offence was apparently a minor one, possibly of riotous

behaviour or church robbery. He was in any case a marked man, and was no doubt arrested and gaoled on the smallest pretext. But after leaving the young Duke's roof, he was soon again in much more serious trouble at Orleans, where he lay in gaol awaiting execution. The nature of his offence or offences is again unknown, but they were presumably of a more serious character. Villon owed his release and delivery from death to the entry of the young Princess Marie of Orleans into the town. Her passage was signalled by a wholesale release of prisoners.

Villon was by no means without the virtue of gratitude. He celebrated his release in verses which echo a splendour of music which has seldom if ever been surpassed.

We now approach the most significant incident in Villon's criminal career, his examination before the Bishop of Orleans and his committal to prison in 1461. It is not easy to account for the poet's venomous hatred of this man.

Throughout the Great Testament the bishop is continuously and poisonously reviled. It is true that the Bishop of Orleans had examined and committed him to prison, but others had done the same without calling down this fury of resentment. It was also hysterically exaggerated, for his prosecutor was not the monster

of cruelty and tyranny that Villon's picture of him suggests. This is the most remarkable aspect of the problem. The bishop was, on the contrary, a better and more just man than a large number of his contemporaries. His character is comparable with Richelieu's, though he lacked the Cardinal's constructive genius and unscrupulousness. Nor was he vindictive as Richelieu sometimes was. But the Bishop of Orleans was avaricious—that common fault of highly placed churchmen at that time—and he was without human understanding. Of his sense of duty and the rectitude of his life there is no question.

He certainly handled his prisoner severely. Villon underwent the ordeal by water of the Question both Ordinary and Extraordinary. It was a painful and brutal method of extracting evidence from suspects or accused, and not likely to stir up feelings of charity, but it was the ordinary procedure of the day and not in itself sufficient to arouse such immortal hate.

In exposing the real origins of this venom, fundamental theories of criminal reaction and behaviour become involved. The true explanation of Villon's hatred lies in the fact that the Bishop of Orleans did not hate him. He represented cool justice, the impersonal machinery of society, the criminal's greatest because his most dangerous enemy. It was probably

Villon's first encounter with formal justice, not commonly administered at that time with much impartiality. From the point of view of equity it was generally as sound as our own, but it was tinged with a certain vindictiveness against the criminal as such, and his punishment it regarded with real satisfaction. What was true of the law could be applied with even greater justice to the police who, in cases of riot and disturbance, or if criminals were troublesome, made no difficulties about reprisals and indeed often behaved no better than the malefactors themselves. They were the enemies of the criminal first, and guardians of the public safety afterwards.

This is a point of view which Villon as essentially a criminal type would have recognized and understood. The war with the police and the law was a conflict of human passions ; it might arouse anger but not hatred. In the person of the Bishop of Orleans these passions masked themselves behind the cold indifferent machinery of abstract social justice.

All this is well enough borne out by his trial in Paris whither he returned after his release from the Meun prison of the Bishop of Orleans. He became involved in a street brawl and was sentenced to death in the Provost's Court. Even had Villon been responsible in any way for the hostilities, and it appears that he was

not, the sentence would have been harsh in the extreme. As it was, the manifest injustice was rectified on his appeal and the sentence remitted. But Villon had made Paris too hot to hold him. He was banished for ten years. In this is to be observed the workings of equity. Villon was a dangerous man and an habitual criminal. He was banished from the city for the city's good, but from a legal point of view and from the evidence the procedure was very harsh.

It is of interest also to note that bitterly though he resented this injustice there is nowhere in his protest that venom which marks his attack upon the just if inhuman Bishop of Orleans.

This brief account of the criminal career of François Villon throws no direct light upon the mystery of Villon himself, nor does it illuminate the secret of his greatness. It is not immediately evident why he was by instinct a criminal nor what relation his criminality had to his genius. To consider that, it will be necessary to return to his early life, and to the extraordinary conditions of his period.

To consider first the period, it was marked by a conflict increasingly acute and dangerous, as between the forces of thought and those of action. Such contention belongs in especial

to no place or period, but its intensity varies, and in the Paris of the middle of the fifteenth century it was very intense indeed. The University of Paris formed a town with its own government within the city, and in the conflicts which arose between the University and Civic authorities heads were continually broken. The serious riot, for it was nothing else, of 1451 is an example. Beginning with a students' rag, it ended with an attack by the city police upon university graduates and students who were returning from the presentation of a petition to the Provost, and in the affray a number of students were killed, and some university dignitaries very severely handled.

The original cause of the trouble was ostensibly the refusal of the University on principle to pay certain taxes. Beneath all this, however, was the cleavage of ideals and interest as between the ignorant bourgeois and money-maker, and the intellectual—the conflict of the kingdom of thought with that of mammon. Exactly the same thing is to be observed to-day. There is no disturbance or revolution in any country unattended with clashes between university students and police, often accompanied by bloodshed. Our own university rags are but sublimed manifestations of the same impulse.



It was, however, more acute and dangerous at that time, since both factions possessed official privileges and power which they were determined to maintain and if possible to extend.

In the material sphere the victory was to the crude strength of mammon, but intelligence began to fight with more dreadful if more abstract weapons. This is well shown in the century's morbid and quite horrible preoccupation with the subject of physical death, with the more ghastly phases of material corruption and the work of the worm that dieth not. The frightful *Danse Macabre* was everywhere set up, the grinning skeleton walking, running, or dancing in all company, at work, at play, and at every feast; King Death a greater one than the King of Life. The poets reacted to the same inspiration.

. . . Our eyen sinking,  
Our bodies stinking,  
Our gummys grinning,  
Our souls brynning,  
To whom shall we sue  
For to have rescue  
But to sweet Jhesu.

Thus John Skelton. From Spain a more delicate reaction to the grosser aspect of physical corruption in Don Jorge Manrique's polished harmony :

Decidme ¿ la hermosura,  
La gentil frescura y tez  
De la cara,  
La color y la blancura,  
Quando viene la vejez,  
Que se para ?  
Las mañías y ligereza,  
Y la fuerza corporal  
De juventud,  
Todo se torna graveza,  
Quando llega al arrabal  
De senetud.

Thus did the forces of intellect with a subtle vindictiveness revenge themselves upon the world of mammon. It was, of course, all done in the name of religion, but only because intellectual forces were all centred around the Church, for outside the ecclesiastic organism no learning existed. This insistence upon the physical aspect of death was indeed a break with earlier tradition. It would have horrified Francis of Assisi, unlearned and pious, who is said to have cried out when dying, "Welcome, Sister Death !"

The prevalence of the plague no doubt had something to do with this ghastly inspiration, but famine and pestilence were common enough in medieval Europe. A particular outbreak is not in itself sufficient to have inspired the Danse Macabre. It represents rather a point of view, the resultant of acute conflict.

This sharp cleavage of the world of thought and of affairs manifested itself in other ways. Most important of these was the creation long before of one law for the learned and another for the Philistine. It is sometimes forgotten that it was not only the higher clergy who were exempt from civil jurisdiction. Every university student enjoyed the privilege. When entering upon his university course, he received minor orders and became subject only to ecclesiastical law. This fact has a vital bearing upon the criminal problem. It gave the intelligent rascal a unique opportunity. There is direct evidence of this. Colin of Cayeux, who was hanged for robbery with violence and rape, hoped to escape at any rate the full consequence of his act by an appeal to the ecclesiastical power. Villon makes this quite clear in one of his ballads. The manœuvre failed in this case, for Colin had gone too far. Sometimes, however, it must have been useful. The ecclesiastical court was not necessarily less severe than that of the Provost, but where questions of jurisdiction and privilege arose, the clerical miscreant was likely to get the benefit of any dispute.

This conflict had a third and very important effect in fostering, indirectly, definitely criminal instincts in university students. The sharp division between the world of thought and

affairs induced in the one a contempt for the other. It encouraged in the one less well equipped for the cruder struggles of existence any willingness there might be to employ his wits to prey upon the society he despised. It began in the student days. There is overwhelming evidence. The clashes between University and City were generally the result of students' frolics. They were nearly always accompanied by theft from shopkeepers and often by acts of violence. The behaviour of the Criminal Lieutenant's police in the affair of 1451 left a good deal to be desired, but it is difficult to believe that they acted without provocation. A boy generally began his university career at the age of twelve to thirteen. It is not difficult to understand the effect of such early traditions upon young students during their most impressionable years.

It accounts for the formidable organization of the Coquillard. A university student already well grounded in a contempt for civil law, if thrown upon the world without influence or money, would discover then—as he often discovers now—that academic attainment is not in itself the one essential for earning even a bare living. It is remarkable not that so many turned to crime but that more did not. Learning, then held in greater respect by professor and patron, was still of less use in the

world of everyday than it is in this twentieth century.

It is here necessary to return for a moment to the influence of the cult of the Danse Macabre. Its curious effect was not so much to produce (as it may have aimed at doing) a devout affirmation of the warning, *Sic transit gloria mundi*. It encouraged, rather, a morbid curiosity, a real taste for gazing upon rotting corpses bred perhaps of fear and hope that familiarity might breed contempt. How else is to be explained the practice of gallants of that time in taking their mistresses to indulge in midnight revels outside Paris around the gibbets of Montfaucon upon which bodies always hung, devoured by birds of prey? All this death preaching had perhaps after all one quite contrary to the intended effect. Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow *we* die. We catch in this direction yet another glimpse of potentially criminal ethics.

It is out of this strangely patterned background that the figure of Villon emerges. He is essentially part of its confusion and uncertain ethical standard. He had looked upon the gruesome vision of King Death, and no doubt came to the conclusion that since he could not be cheated at the last, no time must be wasted, no opportunity lost to enjoy a little of women, wine, and song. He certainly began very early

in his student days to seek the girls and the taverns.

It is not so remarkable that he, a scholar and Master of Arts, should so quickly have entered the confraternity of Coquillard. Theoretically he was already committed to it while in the University. It is impossible to question the antisocial bias of the University in all which did not relate to its own government, or to ignore its practical results. It did, in fact, in practice if not in theory, actually protect its adherents from the consequences of their acts, providing they were not directed against the Alma Mater. For those who cared to interpret its bias that way it became a very prototype of the Coquillard.

So it appeared to Villon, his friend Colin of Cayeux, and the rest, when they left the University without money or much influence, but with a taste for life's luxuries, and were faced with earning a bare living on the miserable wages of scribes or tutors.

We observe, therefore, nothing unique in this aspect of Villon's criminality. It was that of a type of which he was one of hundreds.

But at that point it diverges ascendant, if rampant, upon the wings of his poetry.

Villon's verse is instinct with the greater conflict of the two worlds of thought and mammon, and he objectifies it in the higher sphere

of nobler revolt. In his verse it is Villon the genius who speaks. Even when he employs the crudest and most criminal of material to effect his purpose it remains the symbol of titanic, never of puny, struggle. He was the incarnation of the tortured spirit of his time.

Had he not been a criminal by instinct and choice his poetry would never have been written at all. The raw material of his experience was the only type of material he could have used—being the man he was—to place before us in its entirety that varied pageant of love and cruelty, squalor and richness, barbarous ignorance and profound learning which were so strangely interwoven in the contemporary social fabric. Even the venom he spits at the cold respectable Bishop of Orleans is of a piece with the rest. He is there warring against Mammon, not University, for if the good Bishop is respectably learned it is still mammon that he represents.

If the philosophy and habit of mind of François Villon can be summed up shortly it might be said that it is typically criminal, but in its individual aspect something much greater. A saying elsewhere quoted in this book provides an apposite example: that of the Italian criminal who said, "I am imprisoned for stealing half a dozen eggs; Ministers who rob millions every day are honoured. Poor Italy."

Villon might have said that, but he would have said it with such a passion of conviction that the words would have been so turned as to be not a shallow, unconvincing excuse, but a profound and immortal truth.



## THE CRIMINAL DETECTIVE

LOUIS DESPREZ, a literary man once himself in prison for a technical offence, neatly defined the psychology of the criminal thus: "They see the world under the aspect of an immense gaol, alternating with an immense brothel."

François Vidocq was once deep in that world of the gaol and the brothel, and it would therefore perhaps be more accurate to put him in the category of the criminal rather than in that of the genius. Ashton Wolfe has truly observed, nevertheless, that there was something extraordinary about a man whose *Memoirs* inspired *Les Misérables* of Victor Hugo and were responsible for the Vautrin of Balzac's *Père Goriot*.

The emergence of this great man, for Vidocq ought to be numbered amongst the greatest detectives who ever lived, would have been impossible except under such social conditions as obtained in France immediately prior to the Revolution, during its sway, and until the rise of Napoleon. It is very difficult to decide which in every sense was the more crazy

regime, that of France under Louis XVI, or the rule of the Revolution. They were only crazy in different ways.

The society of Louis could tolerate as Grand Almoner of France such a fool as Cardinal de Rohan, who wrote of Cagliostro that "he is no charlatan but the greatest man who has ever appeared upon this earth." It could do more, believe what he said concerning that prince of charlatans. Curious too, and rather attractive, the polite licentiousness which winked at the most brazen prostitution but never used the word, and which smiled upon gilded rogues and even common swindlers. In such circumstances, however, too much is not to be expected of the police.

The society of the Revolution was swayed only by more openly criminal a folly quite lacking in the graceful cap and bells of King Louis' time. The results, as far as the police, such as they were, and the military guardians of the peace were concerned, go to show that the frailties of the old order survived to a great extent in the new. It is a curious fact that, had they not done so, Vidocq might never have been either a criminal or a detective.

The man was a typical product of his time. Vidocq was born in 1775, his father being a baker, a tradesman in profession and outlook. His son was good looking and of exceptional

address for his station. He was a great favourite with women and given over to profligacy. Further, Vidocq lived by his wits. In 1792 he was arrested for assault in circumstances which would have delighted Boccaccio. He was discovered in the bedroom of Madame Guillemin, the young wife of a notary. The rather naturally irritated husband, on discovering him, attempted chastisement, but Vidocq turned the tables by thrashing the husband. This led to his arrest.

The year was 1792, before the fall of the King. It is an indication of the spirit of the times that the court did not take the affair very seriously, the judge merely directing that the father should thrash his son.

This escapade, it was scarcely a crime, resulted in his flight from Arras, and in another incident which would have put him within reach of the law. He persuaded the postilion of the Lille chaise to give him a lift. At a stopping-place on the road Vidocq managed to gag and bind the postilion while he was drinking, and taking his uniform coat took the horses on himself. He escaped at the next post and changed into other clothes.

His wanderings began on foot, and Vidocq worked and begged his way to Ostend. He found the Belgian seaport less hospitable than his native France, but it was there that he fell

in with the famous circus of Cotte-Camus. He does not appear to have performed in the circus, but was employed in some general capacity. The experience, all the same, was to prove of great value to him afterwards. Vidocq's real genius as an actor may be traceable to the experience as a showman developing a natural capacity. He also learnt acrobatic tricks. This early training probably accounts for his remarkable agility which was to serve him so well in the dangerous work he afterwards undertook.

He returned later to Arras and was received by his parents. The Revolution had begun in earnest. Under the new regime a former blacksmith of the town had become mayor. Vidocq was accused of some technical political offence and imprisoned. Release came through the mayor's daughter, Annette Chevallier, who wanted to marry Vidocq and obtained a pardon for him. He did, in fact, marry this girl and seems to have remained faithful to her, but that he regretted the sacrifice of his freedom there is no doubt. Joining a regiment of cavalry, he was shortly afterwards ordered to Lille. He returned to find his wife in the arms of an officer of the local regiment. A duel followed in which the officer was wounded.

France under the Revolution had changed little in manners and morals except that vices

which had been the prerogative of the aristocracy became now the privilege of the revolutionaries. Annette Chevallier was to some extent immune from the criticism of her neighbours as daughter of the Mayor, and Vidocq, by fighting with her lover, was in danger of losing his liberty for a considerable time, or even his life. He received, as a matter of fact, a light sentence, since the reputation of his wife was well known.

Vidocq was visited in prison by a girl named Francine with whom he fell in love, and he decided with her assistance to make his escape. Despite his short sentence there was good and sufficient reason for taking this risk. He was in danger of being accused of assisting in the escape of two other notorious criminals and feared that the offence he had given to his wife and her family would result in a severe punishment.

The escape was achieved, but in the resulting hue and cry he became separated from the girl. Travelling circuses were at that time a common feature in Europe and it happened that he fell in with another, and was taken on as a clown.

There is no doubt that Vidocq was constitutionally incapable of fidelity. Women were responsible for much of his good and evil fortune. A gipsy girl of the circus took his fancy and he entered into a liaison with her.

Francine discovered the affair by chance. The girl, who had assisted him to escape, was furious and gave information against him. He was arrested after a desperate resistance, but again escaped with the assistance of the repentant girl who had betrayed him.

The man was hunted from pillar to post. He escaped to Arras, was retaken and accused of the murder of the girl, Francine, some of whose bloodstained clothes had been found. This charge was withdrawn upon the appearance of the girl in court and her evidence to the effect that she had attempted to commit suicide. But he was sentenced upon the previous charge and imprisoned, only to escape again.

It has been suggested that Vidocq was an instinctive criminal, but the evidence on this point is doubtful. He had been hunted all over France on a charge of assisting in the escape of two prisoners, an accusation of which he was apparently innocent. His own offence had been purely technical. As an escaped prisoner circumstances were against him, and in Ostend, whence he returned, a fugitive from law if not from justice, he certainly took to living by his wits. There Vidocq made card-sharpping his occupation for some time.

He was taken by the press-gang of a Dutch ship, escaped, and joined a French privateer,

which he deserted at Dunkirk, where he was again taken and imprisoned at Brest. Here he met a fellow prisoner who was to become his lifelong associate in crime and detection, Cocolacour. The two escaped and ultimately reached Paris, at that time probably the most criminal city in Europe.

This part of his life is described in his *Memoirs*, which indicate that this remarkable man was no ordinary criminal. That he lived by crime in Paris there is no doubt, and he was associated with the worst and most dangerous elements in the city. He closely studied his associates. His powers of observation and description are preternaturally acute, but not more acute than his inferences. He was the first criminal psychologist, and it was to this knowledge gained at first hand that he owed his extraordinary success as a Chief of the French Police. He was the first to recognize that at least a certain type of criminal existed as a class apart and had observed with that cynicism characteristic of him that, where ordinary members of society praised virtue at least in the abstract, the criminal lauded vice. He graphically describes a large room full of the fumes of tobacco and drink. Rows of tables are there where drunken revellers watch the dancers. There are shouting, oaths, and strident music. The place is the abode of swindlers,

prostitutes, and those who are half roughs and half the more dangerous type of robber.

Vidocq's transition from the profession of crime to that of detection was certainly a sufficiently bold stroke. It had about it also the simplicity of genius. Disguised, he called upon M. Henry, Chief of the Paris Police, and offered his services, saying that he would cleanse the town in a year. Paris, and indeed the whole of France, had need of it. The criminal problem following a revolution is bound to be aggravated in any case. The prisons were full of military and political offenders, shoulder to shoulder with those guilty of offences against person and property. Political offenders, originally respectable people, released but under suspicion and deprived of a means of livelihood, swelled the criminal ranks—dangerous enemies of a society they had every reason to hate.

Vidocq's motive for this sudden *volte face* is not easy to decide. He undoubtedly wished to be reunited with the only woman among the many who had been his associates he really loved, and he made his offer conditional upon her release from prison, whence she had been committed upon a charge of having assisted in his escape. But there were other reasons. He was a man of great ability, for which he could find no outlet in crime. Circumstances had forced him into the company of cut-throats and



pickpockets and others of the lowest stamp and intelligence. He might have become another Jonathan Wild, and indeed his success as a detective depended to a great extent upon the use of methods similar in principle to those employed by that genius among scoundrels, with the important difference that he happened to be on the side of the police.

His offer was at first refused. More out of anger and contempt than for any other reason he returned to crime. He was soon arrested for coining, and on being again brought before M. Henry renewed his offer, which rather curiously was accepted, though without much enthusiasm.

It was in a sense his gesture of contempt for the police. Vidocq claimed that he had broken prison so often that he could not be held; that the police were impotent to deal with the criminal problem of Paris; that he could. The gesture was typical of the man. He was vain, and something of a swashbuckler, but his vanity was founded upon a conviction of capacity. He had no enthusiasm for the police as such, and it was not respect for the law that made him a detective. He lacked the conventional point of view and employed his own methods. He had all the cynicism of the hunted, now turned hunter.

Of his extraordinary capacity there is no

question. He was the pioneer of scientific methods of detection. In the case of the murders of the Duke and Duchess de la Corcière by their son, Pierre Lamort, he made careful measurements of the footprints found on the scene of one of the crimes, when his associates seem to have been convinced that the murders were of supernatural origin. He entirely reorganized the French police on a basis which is retained in essentials to this day.

He had no political loyalties and would accept any work which offered sufficient reward without too serious a risk. But at heart he was a royalist. Although he had at that time retired from his official position as Chief of Police, there was grave danger in investigating the question of the death of Louis XVI's son. The reward offered was very great, but there seems to be some doubt if he ever received or asked for anything more than the present given to him in the name of an English peer. This affair nearly cost him his liberty, since the political police searched his rooms, but discovered—owing to his cunning foresight—nothing which could incriminate him. He found it advisable, however, to take refuge in England.

It is at least arguable that genius can be made and is not necessarily inborn. Vidocq attained to a genuine hatred of the criminal.

It was a sentiment, however, with no ethical basis, but had its roots in revenge.

His initial successes were due to the fact that he was known and trusted in criminal circles. Vidocq was actually returned to prison by the police, and under the guise of a felon obtained valuable information which led to the arrest of many notorious offenders. As a result, the girl Francine was murdered by one of the creatures of Lamort in revenge for his treachery. This girl, whose moral standards were hardly those of the conventional and respectable, and who had been his associate in crime, deserves to be numbered among the heroes and heroines that Carlyle and many others have credited to revolutions in righteousness. She valiantly stood by him through good and evil report. It was an answering revenge for her murder that was Vidocq's inspiration. He never understood abstract justice, and probably would not have sympathized with it if he had.

Revenge was now his inspiration. He had turned to the police in order to ensure the release of Francine, also, however, gaining immunity for himself, for it was the recognized practice at that time for the police to employ criminals as spies, granting them pardon for past crimes as reward. This dubious practice had been introduced by the Minister of Police, de Sartines, under Louis XVI. It was greatly

developed by Lenoir, his successor, and later by Fouché and Savary.

Vidocq achieved being much more than an ex-criminal spy; but it was after the death of Francine that he really became a policeman. He created the first Brigade de Sureté. Vidocq was in fact the first man to organize detection at all. He began with four men, but the numbers grew during the year 1817 to twenty-eight. His department was responsible during that year alone for the arrest of 772 criminals, of whom all were dangerous, and 15 murderers. During ten years of work he is said to have been responsible for bringing to justice 15,000 criminals, a tremendous total. His energy was enormous. He was available at any hour of the day or night, always ready, well shaved and smartly dressed. The dandyism of his youth remained with him until the end of his life.

His power as an actor was amazing. In the case of the murder committed by the Abbé Fazeol, he disguised himself so well as the Count d'Andre, after having seen him only once, that he deceived the Abbé and his niece. There is a yet more telling example. Early in his career he had noted that criminals always gave themselves away by a characteristic dragging of the leg to which the ring and chain had been attached. Vidocq had worn it many times,

but he never walked with this peculiar limp, which meant swift and inevitable detection. Both as a fugitive from the law and as a detective, he disguised himself successfully as a woman on more than one occasion.

He had a great capacity for the collection and utilization of data. At a time when a technique of criminal detection literally did not exist, he initiated and reduced to order those principles of taking evidence and selecting from it relevant fact which is the basis of scientific detection. This is proved almost more clearly by his career after his official resignation than before. He became a private inquiry agent and set up an information bureau which dealt with many thousands of cases yearly of the most varied kind. Vidocq could supply information as to the probable financial stability of an undertaking or individual, or, on the other hand, lay his hands on a criminal the police were powerless to discover. He exposed a long firm swindle on at least one occasion before the police were even aware of it. That he employed the dubious methods with which a corrupt system had made him too familiar there is no doubt. No satisfactory evidence exists, however, that Vidocq was not honest in his dealing. He was perpetually in trouble with the authorities, was twice arrested, and once had, as we have seen, his papers

impounded. But his greatest crime was to use the methods his one-time colleagues used themselves, and jealousy was probably at the bottom of the endeavours made to indict him on criminal charges.

Vidocq with his vices, and his half-criminal habit of mind, is a great figure which towers head and shoulders over those of his contemporaries. His greatness arose from his wish to avenge, his contempt for the police, and his complete indifference to the verdicts of society. He constantly fought for and in some measure won an ascendancy over them both.

He was courageous, impudent, and vain. His warfare against crime did not prevent his making use of criminals in the old fashion, and he chose his lieutenants from among the most able and most impudent thieves. On one occasion he tested a candidate by giving him ten francs to buy fowls in the market. The man returned with the fowls and the ten francs. Surprised and pleased, Vidocq asked the man how he had accomplished the feat. The candidate explained that he had gone to the market with a hod of bricks on his shoulder and asked the woman to sling the fowls on to it for him. While she complied he had picked her pocket of the ten francs he had paid her. The man had explained all this to Vidocq with a great deal of pantomime. It was with no mere

desire to impress his prospective employer that he acted as well as described his feat. The great detective discovered after his departure that the man had removed from *his* pocket his gold watch and chain. That he was able to maintain and even develop a system upon which public opinion—in those better years following the Terror—had begun to frown, and which even the police had come to dislike, is evidence of the influence he wielded and of his independence of mind.

But he had genius. He was an organizer and a born leader of men. Vidocq was able to turn his selected criminals into genuine policemen. The old system had not been able to do that. He solved a problem with which the modern alienist struggles to-day. Vidocq knew how to convert the criminal who was not hopeless into a useful member of society. His successor and one-time lieutenant, Coco-Lacour, failed. He understood the letter of Vidocq's methods, but not the spirit, and under him the Sureté became nothing more than an organization of police spies as in the worst days of de Sartines and Lenoir. A few years later the system was abolished, and any man who had been a criminal was disqualified for service in the police. Ugly and dangerous incidents determined the authorities on this course. It required a Vidocq to make such a system workable.

His vanity was not of the kind which caused him to seek public honours, and he certainly received none. The stability of the regime of the Empire largely depended upon him. The "people" in the person of Napoleon, having plundered and murdered their aristocracy, now turned to plundering their neighbours upon the theory, probably correct, that otherwise their neighbours would plunder them. There was war without and a criminal problem—aftermath of revolution, full of dangerous possibilities—within. It was with this criminal problem that Vidocq dealt with such vigour and efficiency. Otherwise it might have been a factor in a new revolution.

Vidocq was certainly no ordinary man. That he cannot easily be classified as genius or criminal is an indication of how closely the two qualities may be allied. He was first in conflict with society and yet became its guardian. But here it is important to remember that he was the product of a revolutionary era. To be in conflict with society was therefore to be at war with something which did not exist. In such circumstances anyone may be potentially a hero or a criminal according to his capacity. Vidocq partook of the nature of both, an uneasy synthesis, symbol of uneasy times; but it is, all the same, of exactly such stuff that genius is made.



Under conditions we are accustomed to describe as normal the balance would have swung over sharply in favour of criminality. Vidocq would have remained a criminal, and a very dangerous one at that.

## PORTRAITS OF TWO POISONERS

AFTER her conviction for poisoning, Anna Maria Schonleben confessed to the judge that the sentence of death passed upon her was a fortunate thing for mankind, since she lived for poison alone.

Arsenic is a curious lover for a woman to take to her heart, but eroticism diverted from its normal course, or in some way dammed up, is liable, not infrequently, to appear in dreadful forms, particularly in women. It is sometimes asserted, not very accurately, that poisoning is essentially a feminine crime. It is true that among murderesses the percentage of poisoners is much higher than among murderers, but circumstance rather than a bias in favour of this lethal weapon accounts for this. There is, however, a type of poisoner—and the most interesting psychological type—to which women almost exclusively belong: those who poison as it were for the love of the poison itself. Among men there have been examples of which Dr. Neill Cream is one, but there are indications suggesting that the doctor was not sexually normal. The case,

the only English one, cannot be regarded as typical.

The affair of Anna Maria Schonleben, very rarely quoted, has features so *outré* and bizarre that it is among the most interesting of its kind. Her words already quoted have an odd ring. It was a good thing for *mankind*. There is a suggestion here that her operations had been fairly extensive. On the other hand, there is something very grandiose in the use of the word *mankind* in such a connexion. It is as if she believed that her influence was large and dangerous and of great account.

We first observe Anna Schonleben as a young woman, daughter of an innkeeper in Nuremberg. She was well educated but not beautiful, though she undoubtedly possessed charm. Social aspirations Anna certainly had. A notary of the town married her and for a time the affair progressed well. Her husband was, however, given to drink; a habit which grew with time. She was not the woman to reform a drunken husband. It is more probable that out of malice she encouraged him to drink himself rapidly to death. He died, at any rate, presumably of alcoholic excess. There is no evidence that her strange passion for poisoning had awakened at that time; and there is none that she poisoned her husband.

A period of restlessness followed. Anna

Schonleben was by turns a confectioner and a maker of dolls. She had real ability as a needlewoman, and her inability to succeed was due rather to lack of application than to any other cause. Anna then became a housekeeper in Frankfurt, a cook, and a nursemaid. She kept none of these posts for more than a month or so.

There was a period of despair. She read and reread the *Sorrows of Werther* and twice attempted suicide. She was losing her youth, and her face had already begun to bear the marks of unwise and vicious living. Already the brow was becoming lightly but permanently engraved with that frown which later twisted and disfigured it. She wandered through many towns in Europe, probably earning her living by prostitution, although this is not certain.

At Weimar she became a housemaid, and there committed her first known theft of a diamond ring.

Anna Schonleben was still possessed of some charm and plausibility of address. At Neu-markt she succeeded in starting a girls' school, where she taught needlework. In connexion with this school there was soon a serious scandal, the nature of which is not very clear. There is, however, no question that at the time there was probably no form of vice with which this woman was not acquainted. The matter was

at any rate grave enough to make her flight to Munich imperative.

We have at this period the picture of a disappointed, passionate, almost desperate woman, acquainted to the point of satiation and disgust with most kinds of iniquity. Passions overwhipped and exhausted, but still with cravings left which something must be found to satisfy. Anna Schonleben was by this time also venomously antisocial. Craving and hatred. She was to find something to satisfy both.

Her next abode was Bayreuth, where she earned her living by knitting. She seems to have settled down to work, for she had a reputation for steadiness and industry. A certain Judge Glaser appointed her as housekeeper. He was separated from his wife and required a woman to manage his household. Anna Schonleben carried out her duties with efficiency. She appears as a quiet, unobtrusive woman, perhaps a thought too servile, and with that permanent frowning cloud on her brow which does not lift even when she smiles; but she is respectable and capable.

Alone in her bedroom, however, she is quite changed. The dark but miserable eyes light up as she goes to open one of the drawers of the chest. Her fingers tremble with eagerness. From the back of the drawer she takes a box

and unlocks it. There is a paper packet inside which she opens and gloats over. It contains a white powder. She carefully closes it, and shivering with pleasure presses the packet to her breast.

Anna Schonleben's first act as soon as she was firmly established in the household was to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between the judge and his wife. She conducted these negotiations with great skill, so that when the reconciliation was accomplished much of the credit fell to her.

Within a month the judge's wife had died in great torment after having been taken ill about a week after her return.

There was a motive for this murder. Having got the wife within the sphere of her operations by means of the reconciliation, it was Anna's intention to poison her in the hope that the judge would make her his wife. This act is perfectly comprehensible.

Not so the promiscuous dosing of the guests. During the period of the wife's illness and up to the time of her death most of the guests who dined or supped at the house were afterwards seized with internal pains and sickness.

Even at this stage Anna Schonleben had been bitten with that madness which seizes upon this type of poisoner. She had discovered an instrument which gave her power over lives and

events, and satisfied a passionate craving for revenge against mankind at whose hands she had suffered.

Her schemes for a marriage with Judge Glaser, however, came to nothing, and she left his employment.

The next poisoning was the result of jealousy. Anna became housekeeper to a judge named Grohmann, a man of thirty-eight, who suffered from gout. He was engaged to a woman whose letters the housekeeper intercepted. In spite of this the banns of marriage were published in the course of time. Anna Schonleben showed furious and even insane excitement. The judge died soon afterwards with all the symptoms of arsenical poisoning, but the death was certified as being due to natural causes.

In this household also there were a number of more or less motiveless poisonings. Anna dosed the beer of two men servants with tartar emetic and arsenic for no better reason than that she disliked them. The two servants took very little of it, but a third person was seriously ill from the effects.

Anna Schonleben had no difficulty in getting a post as nurse in the household of yet a third judge named Gebhard, since she had nursed Grohmann with apparent devotion. She had not the slightest acquaintance with pity, but there was in this case probably some sort of

perverved love for this man, and sadistic satisfaction in his sufferings.

The motive for the murder of Judge Gebhard's wife is not evident. Anna Schonleben was employed to nurse her after her confinement, and she was then poisoned. Her death was not greatly remarked since she had been ailing for some time. There is no definite evidence to suggest that the housekeeper endeavoured to make the judge her husband. Anna continued in the judge's service and during the next few months fellow servants and guests to the house were literally poisoned wholesale with arsenic and tartar emetic, although none appears to have died. She was dismissed as the result of these mysterious illnesses. The curious reason advanced indicates that no real suspicion attached to her even at this time. It was supposed that the housekeeper was an unfortunate who heralded illness and death wherever she went. This is confirmed by the excellent character given to her by her employer.

Anna Schonleben accepted her fate without any protest except to declare that she had always done her duty, which was ostensibly true. The night before her departure she filled the salt-box. It was no part of her duty, she remarked, but if others were a little more enthusiastic they would do their work better. In the morning she also prepared the meal for



the maids. Anna at the time of her departure made a great show of sorrow, and affectionately kissed the judge's child and gave it a biscuit.

The whole family was very shortly afterwards taken seriously ill.

Suspicion was at last aroused. The authorities on being informed took possession of various articles, including the salt-box, and they were examined. A very large quantity of arsenic, equivalent to ten grains per pound of salt, was discovered.

This of course led up to the exhumation of the bodies of Frau Glaser, Frau Gebhard, and Judge Grohmann. Arsenic was traced in the bodies of the two women, but none was found in that of the judge. At this time (1809) the fact that no arsenic was found in the body of one of the victims is not proof that none was present. The methods of analysis then in use were probably even cruder than those condemned by Orfila in the Lafarge case thirty years later. It remains uncertain whether Grohmann died from arsenical or antimonial poisoning with tartar emetic. The remains do not seem to have been examined for antimony, if indeed any method existed for detecting it. The symptoms, however, and the autopsy left very little doubt that the victim had been poisoned.

Anna Schonleben was arrested.

We next find her in the dock charged with

murder. She is now a woman of fifty, misshapen, almost deformed, with small malignant eyes which shift and glitter. Anna is thin of body, haggard of face, heavily lined and furrowed, yellow. Her manner is compounded of servility and fierce protest at these unjust accusations.

Owing to the cumbrous judicial procedure in Bavaria at that time, the examination and trial dragged on for eighteen months. The inquiry was conducted with great fairness. One of the most interesting details of the evidence was relating to her apprehension when arsenic was found upon her. When looking at it she "trembled with pleasure and gazed upon the white powder with eyes beaming with rapture."

She received sentence of death and was executed in the July of 1811. Before death she made the confession with which this story was begun. Her vindictiveness pursued the unfortunate Judge Glaser beyond the grave, since Anna never confessed to this murder, but to the last accused the judge of poisoning his wife. He was actually tried but acquitted.

The Marie Jeanneret affair was one of the sensations of the middle of the nineteenth century.

There was no recognizable motive for the deliberate and inhuman series of murders that

this Swiss woman committed. Marie Jeanneret was an efficient and sympathetic nurse. The alienist's report upon her condition indicated that she was perfectly sane and no history of insanity was traced. Marie Jeanneret had a gentle and cheerful manner, and her record proved not only her efficiency in her profession, but indicated that she possessed in a very marked degree all those qualities which go to make up the born nurse.

It was this woman who was tried in Geneva in 1868 for the murder of seven of her patients by the administration of poisons which brought about their painful and in some cases lingering deaths. Her demeanour in court was quiet and unaffected, and she answered the questions of the President with the greatest self-possession. The evidence given at the trial was perhaps the most remarkable that has ever been heard at law in connexion with a poisoning case. It was proved beyond doubt that no material motive existed. The accused had suffered considerable pecuniary loss by the death of her victims, and in no case was there any compensating advantage whatever. It further appeared that Marie Jeanneret had on many occasions taken different kinds of poison herself with a view to studying its effects, and it was suggested that she had, in fact, immunized herself from the effects of those used to destroy

her victims. Although Marie Jeanneret undoubtedly experimented on herself, the theory that she was immune is not probable. The expression immunization used in connexion with poisoning is inaccurate. In the case of arsenic, and to a much smaller degree in that of some alkaloidal poisons, there are varying limits of tolerance, but these are not precise or quantitative in their effect.

A great deal of eloquence was expended both by prosecution and defence. The prosecuting advocate was at a great disadvantage since the full admission of guilt and a plea of complete moral insanity in this one direction formed the basis of the arguments for the defence. Her advocate sought to show that Marie Jeanneret was a toxico-maniac outrageously in love with her instruments of destruction. It was proved that the preoccupation of her life apart from nursing was the study of toxicology. She had concentrated upon atropine and experimented with methods of extracting it from belladonna. The analysis and detection of alkaloidal poisons had been another line of investigation. Marie Jeanneret had spent much of her time in the laboratory, and had once sustained a severe burn in the course of her experiments. There seems to be little doubt that her one motive was a passion for this branch of research, and that, like Dr. Marain, whose case is discussed

later, she considered her investigations of more importance than the sacrifice of human life.

The jury was absent five hours and returned at last the extraordinary verdict of guilty with extenuating circumstances. Literally irrelevant as this verdict was, the jury obviously felt that a plain pronouncement of guilty inadequately expressed its conclusions.

One possible aspect of the case, from the point of view of the defence, does not seem to have been sufficiently brought out. Though it would have done very little to extenuate, having regard to the number of the murders, the motive in the light of it would have appeared a little more solid.

It does seem possible that Marie Jeanneret may have administered poison to her victims with a view to discovering if she could (so to call it) immunize them. This, if it does not extenuate, explains and defines the motive a little more clearly. In the circumstances it seems less inadequate a suggestion of motive than a sadistic impulse in support of which in this curious case there is no evidence whatever.

The sentence of the court was twenty years *travaux forcés*. Her behaviour in prison was exemplary. It was more. She appears to have made every endeavour to assist her fellow prisoners and sweeten their lives. She taught needlework and embroidery by permission of

the authorities, and was allowed to attend the sick, a duty for which she had been trained and to which she applied herself assiduously. It is said that this woman was the greatest influence for good within the prison walls. Marie Jeanneret died in prison in 1883.

*Si duo faciunt idem non est idem.* There was never a sounder legal maxim than this. The nature and quality of any criminal act is always more or less conditioned by the individual who commits it. Anna Maria Schonleben and Marie Jeanneret were guilty technically of the same crime, but the contrast is marked, the comparison, though also of interest, of less importance.

Schonleben's career is one typical of the instinctive criminal. However unimaginatively conceived, the object of the principal crimes was gain. The bizarre feature of the case was the woman's toxicomania, her real love of poison. But here again is to be observed the operation of a criminal habit of mind. Her early days had been full of misfortune culminating in minor crime of one kind or another. She hated the social order to which she, quite illogically, attributed her misfortunes. The learned Judge Feuerbach, in commenting upon this case after careful analysis of all the evidence, came to the conclusion that it was a conscious

hatred of society which was the only motive of many of the poisonings. This is implicit in all that Schonleben said and did after her arrest.

This woman, on a conservative estimate, probably poisoned no less than eighty people. There is to be observed something besides her criminality, a perverted will to power which cannot transcend the atavistic quality of the desire and power to destroy. This is not a characteristic of the criminal who has no desire to destroy that upon which he preys. It has elsewhere been pointed out that the criminal when not professionally engaged often appears as a highly respectable member of society. He *does* respect it, even while doing it injury. Anna Schonleben belongs to more hybrid a class. She endeavours to prey upon society while destructively hating it. It is a kind of inverted genius. The woman entirely failed as a criminal, but not because her crimes were clumsily executed. They were not. The number of persons poisoned before she was arrested bears eloquent testimony to that. She failed because the motive of hatred and the desire consciously to enjoy the power she wielded always prevailed over that of interest.

Marie Jeanneret was also a toxicomaniac. It is a curious coincidence that both she and Schonleben should have been expert embroideresses and needlewomen. She was equally piti-

less in her use of lethal agents, but in other respects she differed entirely from Schonleben. Reading the record of the crimes themselves would induce the conviction—as in the case of Schonleben—that there must be something monstrous about her, even physically misshapen and malignant. Nothing of the kind is evident in Jeanneret's portrait. It is that of a gentle and refined woman. She was not in the criminal sense an enemy of society. There is nothing to suggest maladjustment to environment. On the contrary, this Swiss nurse seems to be the embodiment of all that is normal, except that she persists in the use of poison.

Marie Jeanneret's motive lacks altogether the barbarous simplicity of Schonleben's. It was, in fact, very complex. If it be assumed that she was convinced that immunization from poison was practicable, and experimented with that end in view, it remains to explain her persistence after the first test had proved a failure. It is conceivable that a normal person entertaining so foolish an opinion might have tried the experiment—once.

It is a more consistent theory that Jeanneret represents an example one step closer to the genius type. It is quite clear that a motive of antisocial hatred in the criminal sense does not square with the facts. This woman was obviously in pursuit of serious knowledge. Her



more legitimate experiments prove that. As other examples show, the principal trait of genius appears to be that it considers its theories, aims, and ideals of paramount importance even where they violently clash with the normal social point of view. If they are unconventional, then so much the worse for conventionality. So it was, no doubt, with Marie Jeanneret. Did we but know it, she no doubt accepted the verdict of the court gladly, as one who suffered fools. In her patient and steadfast self-possession there is a hint of contempt.

Genius to realize itself must in its operation transcend such methods as this, but its first inspiration is just such an exquisite contempt which in Marie Jeanneret took the immediately dangerous form of poisoning her patients with atropine.

EXAMPLES  
THE GENIUS TREND



## THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO POETS

THERE are too many notes of interrogation. Why did Paul Verlaine shoot Rimbaud ? Why did Rimbaud go with him to London or indeed have anything to do with Verlaine at all ? Did he hate Verlaine, and if so exactly why ? Was Verlaine homosexual, and did he entertain unnatural feelings for Rimbaud ? But there is no end to the questions which would have to be answered to clear up the mystery entirely.

Yet this strange affair is pregnant with many vital considerations touching the relation between genius, crime, and society. Verlaine can hardly claim a place as a genius, although technically he was a brilliant poet. He certainly committed a crime ; and although the sentence of the Belgian court of two years' imprisonment for malicious wounding was a piece of judicial ferocity, it could hardly be expected to take into consideration circumstances—very difficult for the legal mind to interpret in any case—of which it could have no knowledge.

Verlaine lacked some essential element necessary to genius. Both his art and his Bohe-

mianism were accidental rather than inevitable. Although he was in a sense a Bohemian, as that term was understood from the seventies to the nineties, he wavered in his allegiance. He was born at Metz, his father being an army officer of the most conventional type, and there was a good deal of that conventionality in his son. Verlaine began to write poetry at an early age, but never for a living. At any rate, in his early life he was not sufficiently Bohemian for that. He obtained a small Government appointment beloved of the French bourgeoisie, and there he worked more or less consistently for many years. His life was irregular and he drank a good deal, but he was punctilious enough in the performance of his office duties, though he failed to gain promotion.

Revolt was not to come until later, after his marriage, and then in a form characteristic of the man. If Verlaine was dissatisfied, he was also timid. He resigned his post on the grounds of political disloyalty to the Government. Having regard to the political situation following the Franco-Prussian War, any Government servant might have found himself in this position and have been excused. Verlaine was assured that he was in no danger, yet resigned.

He was actually tired of the Government service. Here was a way out with a smack of the military flavour about it. It was a gloss

upon a rebellious act. Further, the resignation was a gesture and conferred a certain importance upon Verlaine in the scheme of things; a resignation for political reasons. It was a harmless conceit.

But it was more. Verlaine in this way resolved the conflicting elements of his nature, the timid man's respect for authority, the rebel's wish to throw off his slavery, the desire to stand well with himself and his neighbour.

It is open to doubt if Verlaine's resignation from his official appointment or his marriage was his greatest mistake, but there is none that both were grievous errors which wrecked his life. His conventional upbringing no doubt influenced him in his choice of Mlle. Mauté. The Mautés were respectable bourgeois, rather conventional and rather purse-proud, but they had a polite bowing acquaintance with the arts. Again Verlaine tried to reconcile two conflicting impulses through his marriage. He conceived such a position as consistent with, and even agreeable to his *métier*. Protected by his Government appointment (he did not resign until after his marriage), with one foot firmly planted on the stable ground of society and convention, his art would thus be free to develop without the restriction that need of earning money by it would have imposed. This was unquestionably Verlaine's goal and hope in the

earlier days of his marriage. He wanted to make the best of both worlds; to rise by way of talented dilettantism into the loftier region where he could live by an art which had made a conquest (perhaps he would not even have boggled at the word "hit") with society. There are many others who have made a similar attempt and failed; or occasionally succeeded. But in any case this is never the way of genius which will suffer society just so far as it does not attempt to restrict it, but will otherwise try a throw with the many-headed enemy.

Subsequent events were to show that underneath Verlaine bore society a grudge, and it is thus that the spark of genius never fully kindled in him can be said to have been present. He did, after all, enter the lists against it, but it was to be ignominiously and even ludicrously defeated. These defeats are of very great psychological interest because they not only explain Verlaine's failure as an artist but his success, if that it can be called, as a criminal. The shooting of Rimbaud was the one decided, the one really artistic gesture of his life. He bungled even that. The generally accepted view is, and it is quite just, that the shooting of Arthur Rimbaud served Rimbaud right; and there is no question at all that had Verlaine not lost his head, which he always did, he would have shot straighter and with greater effect.

For Arthur Rimbaud was Verlaine's genius in the most literal sense, and a genius for evil as it turned out. To be just, it is necessary to add that there is some evidence that he tried to make and not break Verlaine even if he did behave intolerably at last.

To return to Verlaine's marriage, from the first the going was scarcely good. The bourgeois atmosphere was too much for him. It was one thing to view the comfortable vision of its security from afar, quite another to be in it, without being of it, which is what Verlaine had aimed at. There was steadily increasing friction between husband and wife. It culminated in an open breach, and the cause of that breach, direct or indirect, was Arthur Rimbaud.

He came to stop in the house at Verlaine's request. It is characteristic of Verlaine that he wrote to him, "Come, great and dear soul, we await you, we want you," an exaggerated and rather theatrical form of invitation to a young man many years his junior whom he had never met, even if he genuinely did appreciate and admire his poetry.

The situation rapidly became impossible. Rimbaud, whatever he was, was no dilettante. He had seen a vision unformed and confused perhaps, for he was young, but certainly sufficiently vast. He believed in life, and its



scheme did not include even being in bourgeois society, certainly not being of it. His manners were not good, and indeed he deliberately repulsed Verlaine's friends and his wife. He thought an endeavour was being made to draw him out and exploit him. Rimbaud may have been right. In any case, he was coming to no terms with society except his own. Verlaine, still endeavouring vainly to keep a foot in both camps, quarrelled with him often; and accused him of alienating his friends.

To what extent Rimbaud was responsible for Verlaine's final and most dangerous leap is difficult to determine. It has often been assumed that Rimbaud deliberately widened the breach between Verlaine and his family so that it was never afterwards bridged. Rimbaud hated the Verlaine set, and it was a question of choosing between Rimbaud and them. This Verlaine realized and chose Rimbaud; but there is no evidence that the younger man tried to alienate him from his family. It is doubtful if he had sufficient feeling for him to have attempted that.

Rimbaud, it is quite clear, had determined to break free of the Verlaine household, and there seems nothing to show that Verlaine required any persuasion to break free also.

They left together, at any rate, for London.

What did Verlaine want of Rimbaud? The

homosexual motive suggested by the enemies of both—richly though both deserved condemnation upon any ordinary standards—was a suggestion of malice. It is true that Verlaine apparently had wind of the rumours and made no attempt to counter them. It has even been suggested that his attitude lent them colour. But having decided upon the plunge Verlaine did not care what people thought; he even probably desired a further justification for his retreat on the grounds that his position had been made impossible.

The explanation does not lie there. Verlaine unquestionably loved the man, but he loved him for those moral qualities which he himself lacked but hoped through contact with Rimbaud to be able indirectly to utilize. He divined in Rimbaud a greater poet and artist. Even if Verlaine had shirked the conflict by an attempt to come to terms with society in the hope that by some miracle such a treaty could be kept, he had yet enough of the genius in him to realize that such conflicts were not generally resolved that way. He had discovered it also by bitter experience. Verlaine capitulated first in favour of art, and then in favour of society so that both frowned upon him. It is hardly surprising that his one real relief was drink.

But Rimbaud came, and with him Verlaine's

opportunity. Alone he was not strong enough to break with society, but with Rimbaud at his side it could probably be done. He recognized Rimbaud as uncompromising, and hoped to gain something of his self-sufficient spirit. Verlaine really was a poet and an artist without the will and courage to risk all in striving to realize himself as one. He flew for moral support to Rimbaud, but it was his strength he wanted, not the man himself.

Thus came about the strange and tragic convergence of these twain.

Rimbaud's acceptance of the situation had about it the naïve directness and brutality of the genius. He was determined to get away from the Verlaine ménage which stifled him, and he appears to have been indifferent whether Verlaine went with him or not. But he thought the better of Verlaine on account of his break with relations he did not understand and a wife he did not love. He might have been of a different opinion had he realized what slippery paths they were entering upon; that Verlaine was to destroy him as an artist, and attempt to murder him into the bargain.

In order to understand the true motive of Verlaine's crime, it is necessary to say something of Rimbaud. The man was twice a rebel for, if he despised the formulæ of society, he was equally an opponent of the canons of art.

If art were a substitute for life, so much the worse for art. In poetry, his chosen medium, he was determined to find a formula to express life "red in tooth and claw." If he strove after beauty it was not to be at the expense of ugliness. He wanted to express a larger synthesis. His artistic ideals would have been those after Nietzsche's own heart. He was a pioneer of our modern "realist" schools of poetry and painting. That is why he hated Verlaine's poetry, his "sentimental cater-wauling." Verlaine's vision of beauty was a beauty in inverted commas, a prettiness lacking some essential dimension. It was this vigour that Verlaine coveted without having the strength to seize and utilize it for good and evil. This is clear when it is recalled that only when he and Rimbaud were composing obscene rhymes together in London did they really find themselves at one. But that was as near "reality" as Verlaine could approach. He was incapable of the higher flight that could incorporate the obscene in a greater structure so that its identity as obscenity was lost, merged in a loftier synthesis.

They must have made a strange pair in London. Verlaine with his extraordinary head and curious eyes, highly emotional, almost hysterical at times, repelled by the horror of their sordid existence in London and pro-

claiming his artistic bankruptcy. Rimbaud, dark, thick-set, grim, wearing of all things a top-hat, and hating it all more bitterly than Verlaine, and yet all the time using his experience. Fundamentally he loved life, while Verlaine could only just endure life when glossed over with *his* conception of art realized through his poetry. In London he lost even the relief of the poetic outlet.

It was London that turned Verlaine into a criminal. He had gone with Rimbaud with a selfish or at least an egoistic motive. He did not want, as Rimbaud seems to have thought, an artistic collaboration. He wanted moral support to realize himself as an artist at all costs, and he believed Rimbaud had such morality and to spare. Not that, in any case, Verlaine would have worried. If Rimbaud had none to spare then he would take, if he could, what Rimbaud could not afford to give, leaving *him* bankrupt.

You stole. Your eye's not clear to-day,  
You only stole a thought, Sir, eh ?  
Why be so humbly modest pray ?

It might be argued rather impatiently that this is to transcendentalize criminality. This would be quite true if it were not that the result was, in fact, an actual crime.

They walked, these two, mile upon mile of

the London streets of the seventies with their uncertain glare of street lamps; they explored the darkness and foulness of the docks. They lived in poverty and squalor, and both were nearly always drunk. To Verlaine such a life was pure agony. Rural life was really his inspiration even if he sentimentalized it. He was too delicate a spirit to utilize the strength and harshness of the biggest and then, commercially, the most prosperous city of the most prosperous country in Europe. Nor was there any compensation. Rimbaud, who had been the abiding hope that had made this Babylonish captivity seem possible, and even necessary, failed him, as it seemed, utterly. Verlaine found he could not use Rimbaud as he had hoped as a moral prop, who had enough to do and to spare propping himself up. He did draw upon Rimbaud's strength, but not a sufficiency. Verlaine wrote no poetry worthy of the name, but only in collaboration with Rimbaud some obscene pieces which were nothing more than obscene. That was as far as this "strength" carried him.

And Verlaine began to hate Rimbaud.

Rimbaud's position was different. With an effort of will certainly magnificent he did objectify his experience in verse. The *Sojourn in Hell*, however dark and chaotic, is very frequently tremendously and horribly illumin-

ated. But he had no strength left. What was not used up in his own conflict was drained by Verlaine, who then squandered it. Verlaine clung with the despair of the drowning, crying out that he was spiritually suffocating and must not be forsaken. He destroyed Rimbaud as an artist who had not strength enough to support them both. Rimbaud conceived no more poetry after London, though he wrote his last in Charleville.

But this explains the intolerable way he treated Verlaine. He had to consider the question of self-preservation, and get rid of Verlaine at any cost. To forsake a comrade in the throes of drowning, in the artistic sense, is perhaps no more excusable than when mortal life is at stake, but it is human if you are certain that you cannot save him, and will inevitably be drowned yourself.

Rimbaud quarrelled with Verlaine and insulted him in every way that he could, and yet still Verlaine clung to him as to a straw, hating him all the time. He hated him, however, not by reason of quarrel and insult, their passionate relationship found common ground in little else, but because he had tried to use Rimbaud as a stepping-stone to a real conquest of life and a reconciliation to or creation of a freer environment, and instead of climbing he had fallen. It was not his fault as it appeared

to him but Rimbaud's instability (Verlaine might even have used *that* word). And if he knew that he had destroyed Rimbaud, as he must have done, it would have been that Rimbaud was impossible and would not co-operate. If he had done so it would have meant the triumph and vindication of the art of both.

Verlaine was also jealous of Rimbaud, but not crudely on account of his being the greater poet. That he had always admitted. But Rimbaud had solved his life's problem and that Verlaine never had done and never could do. He probably saw Rimbaud's renunciation of poetry coming, and yet knew that Rimbaud the man would survive in spite of it. He must have been very bitter in the knowledge that he had again miserably failed while Rimbaud had conquered, or would conquer as soon as he was rid of him.

And so the breach came, and Verlaine left London for Brussels.

Verlaine must there have been in the seventh hell. If life was intolerable with Rimbaud, without him it was no better than a by-product of death. In Brussels the death wish, incubated, was strengthened and soon in control. Life was impossible without Rimbaud and their existence as entities apart was unthinkable; the only solution was the death of both.



Verlaine probably had it in his mind to kill Rimbaud and then commit suicide. That was to be his final gesture, the last settlement of his account with life.

The man of talent may be to the man of genius as the pickpocket always is to the bandit. Fundamentally they seek the same solution of the vital problem; they differ only in their degree of courage.

This unhappy man was not to blame for his tragedy and for Rimbaud's. He had talent, capacity for real emotion, a grasp of the machinery of his chosen technique to communicate it. He lacked only courage, the one virtue ultimately much worth having; Verlaine was an arrant but a pathetic coward. With courage he would have been a genius. There was something almost monstrous in his deficiency. Most of us have some courage in one direction or another. Genius requires a superabundance. Verlaine literally appears to have had none.

It is difficult to understand why Arthur Rimbaud answered Verlaine's summons to Brussels and went. Nor is it easy to excuse. That he misunderstood and judged Verlaine harshly is more than probable, but he must have known that the breach in London was the end. But he had his weakness too and Verlaine had drawn virtue out of him. There was some

bond between them which held even in the midst of all that hate.

They met, and under the semblance of a quarrel, for both were beyond that, Verlaine fired. It is impossible to believe that he did not shoot to kill; but he had no nerve, and only slightly wounded Rimbaud. Then he broke down and wept. The gesture had failed miserably; he could not even kill Rimbaud and die, but he is said to have asked Rimbaud to shoot him.

This was the last act of any significance in the tragedy of Verlaine and Rimbaud. It was the end of an association perhaps unique in the history of genius: the attempt at co-operation between two men, one who wanted to realize his genius and failed, and the other who did realize it and then, as it were, renounced that estate or fell from the grace or disgrace of it. Edward Sackville West in the *Apology of Arthur Rimbaud* explains with a nice insight what Verlaine had done to Rimbaud. The author addresses the poet thus:

. . . The Sojourn in Hell is a great crescendo! the movement throughout becomes slower in direct ratio to the increase in dynamic power, until, at the end, the whole seems to open out into a ringing metallic vacuum, in which a brilliance of light has destroyed the meaning of both sound and movement.

And Rimbaud replies:

Beyond that I could not go. My mistake was to have pushed thus far, for such regions of art are necessarily uninhabitable. One arrives there only to die—which is what happened to me. Had I stopped short I might have continued to write poetry to the end of my days, which would then probably have been more than they were. But external forces (among them Verlaine) pushed me on into the airless region until the artist in me died, giving place to that other life which had been asleep in me so long.

That is exactly the point. It all ended in “a ringing metallic vacuum.” “External forces (among them Verlaine)” had inspired his exasperated genius to express almost the inexpressible and die in the attempt.

The end of the Rimbaud story is well known. He went to Africa, traded, married an Abyssinian wife, and struck down with synovitis returned to Roche,<sup>1</sup> to die.

This is all useless if it has not suggested, however incompletely, that genius in good and evil report cannot be judged by the standards of every day. And it makes all the more interesting and even startling Verlaine's curious sequel. In parenthesis it may be mentioned that he met Rimbaud but once after that, and that Rimbaud knocked him down, which in the circumstances is hardly surprising.

Verlaine received two years' imprisonment.

<sup>1</sup> Rimbaud actually died in a hospital at Marseilles.

As to whether such a sentence was just the reader must judge, or leave the matter to a higher court than any yet set up in this world. But surprisingly it was salutary. Victor Hugo's advice to Verlaine that he should patiently endure was perhaps dictated by some amazing flash of insight, for he could have known nothing of the real circumstances, and knew little of Verlaine.

He behaved in an exemplary manner in prison. The military tradition of obedience to authority, the conventional standpoint reasserted itself. He returned afterwards to his mother, whose devotion never wavered. He tried for a reconciliation with his wife, which, however, never came about. In fairness it should be added that that was no fault of his. To become more conventional still, he became a Catholic. Verlaine even sought to re-enter the Government department where he had resigned his place.

Although he continued to drink and outwardly to lead the Bohemian life, actually he had capitulated to society. But he went on writing poetry, and there is nowhere in his verse those dreadful and disturbing signs and portents—so evident in Rimbaud's—of a spiritual experience which could have been no less an agony to him than it was to Rimbaud.

So that they both capitulated, but in different

ways, Verlaine to society and polite talent, Rimbaud only to life, frank and unashamed as he hoped to find it, and did find it, in Africa. Society as usual triumphed. Verlaine lived, but Rimbaud came back to die.

So much for an explanation necessarily incomplete and even tentative of the motive of the crime of Paul Verlaine. But one consideration remains. The crime was at least indirectly a final gesture of rebellion against society. Verlaine had striven, in his own ineffective way, to free himself, to create for himself an environment with the necessary elbow-room. Rimbaud, whom he had attempted to use as an instrument, had failed him, and wounded him beyond healing, as it seemed, as well. He therefore hated Rimbaud, as much and for the same reason that he hated the social order he had tried to escape. Both had declared, each in a different way, that for him escape was impossible. Verlaine was not strong enough to inflict upon society a wound of any consequence, but he could take a shot at Rimbaud.

Though he hated, to some extent in the right way, his hatred was not *sublime* enough.

## THE CRIME OF OSCAR WILDE

MR. LANE has remarked reminiscently of his publishing house that on the occasion of the arrest of Oscar Wilde the newspapers came out with headlines: "Arrest of Oscar Wilde with yellow book under his arm." This was interpreted by an excited public to mean that this book was the famous Yellow Book of John Lane. It was in fact a French novel. But under the influence of this illusion and of excitement, a large crowd stormed the publishing house and broke its windows, demanding, as Mr. Lane neatly concludes, the Head of Bodley on a Charger.

On the whole, public opinion applauded the verdict of two years' hard labour, and for once perhaps it was right. Assuming that it is just in principle to treat an act of homosexuality formally as a crime, the Court was satisfied—as presumably it must be in such cases—not to concern itself with the maxim *cui bono*? Yet there was a motive. Gazing in retrospect across four decades upon that curious and rather revolting spectacle of the nineteenth century *fin de siècle*, we of the twentieth century,

engaged in a dangerous struggle with vital problems, the uneasy legacy of past complacency, are quite as interested in the motives of the nineteenth-century criminal as in his crimes. Indeed, had the motive emerged it could have held no legal relevance. It is, all the same, important for those interested in criminality and the criminal.

Oscar Wilde's offence was that of indulgence in a vice regarded as of more than ordinary grossness. Homosexuality is a disagreeable subject, but research, whose duty it is to examine everything pleasant or unpleasant, has done much to explain it. The conclusion arrived at tends to support the view that such a vice is a matter for the psychiatrist rather than the court of law. In any case it was taken over as an offence by the civil from the ecclesiastical code. To punish it as a crime is very unsatisfactory and probably quite useless as a deterrent.

Oscar Wilde, nevertheless, was perhaps appropriately punished as it were by accident. There was nothing accidental about his crime. There is indeed a sense in which he was vicious of malice aforethought. Yet he, and not only he, was made vicious by reaction against a social trend and drift more vicious in its exhausted bankruptcy than that of its enemies.

The real crime was the point of view. Oscar

Wilde was thus a criminal in the most formal sense. He hated contemporary society, and the fact that his hatred may have been just in no way affects his criminality. Society, whether good or bad, is necessarily, for its contemporaries, above all law.

Strictly speaking, the criminality was not that of an individual but of a movement commonly called æsthetic. In such curious guises and under such misleading names does rebellion cloak itself. The Æsthetic Movement was a rebellion and a very serious rebellion too. Its point of view was æsthetic in the real and legitimate sense, but it was much more. It struck at the very roots of the morality of the late nineteenth century so far as that period can be said to have had any morality at all.

This was out of a certain disgust. The late Victorian attitude was to ignore evil, poverty, and squalor as far as it could, and when it was unable to do this to appeal to the material advantages its process of industrialization was supposed to be producing, and endeavour to show that increasing prosperity would in the end make respectable citizens of the British Empire more respectable than ever. The golden age when virtue would be an ideal and even an actuality for everybody was at hand.

The new kind of slavery was arising. The



period had not realized that its machinery, invented and improved with so much pride and dignified exultation, might, being soulless, prove a crueller master than any previous tyrant. No one indeed believed that a machine could be a master at all. Man-made, it would remain man-controlled, a blessed hope of ever-increasing prosperity. The balance of power was shifting. The landed proprietor was giving way to the industrialist and the capitalist, forming an aristocracy of money, not of birth and privilege. This had a very important result. Idleness in the sense of non-productivity began to come under suspicion, even to be regarded as a crime. Cultivated and graceful dilettantism was in danger of extinction. *Deus ex machina*. It affected morals and virtue—or the nineteenth-century substitute—setting even for them a dead and mechanical criterion.

Such an attitude is bound to be reflected in the penal system. The eighteenth century would gibbet a criminal whenever possible on the grounds that he was a nuisance. It is a consistent if brutal attitude. The nineteenth century punished crime as a sin to reform the sinner. It was too complacent even to admit that its criminals could be a nuisance. It called heaven and earth to witness its justice.

It believed in it as well. Nothing is more

curious than the strange self-hypnotism of the nineteenth century in England.

Into this curious puppet-show those new and brightly painted dolls, Aubrey Beardsley, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symonds, Hubert Crackanthorpe, and many others were, as by some malignant providence, projected.

There is a proverb, not a very old one, that Satan finds work for idle hands to do. Oscar Wilde and his school would probably have admitted the charge of indolence said to be the first of criminal vices, but the admission was one of principle. The cultivated, those with a faculty for the refinements of pleasure, are indolent of right. Theirs was a kind of aristocratic criminality. There is danger in such an attitude. It is a point of view liable to involve experience and investigation of avowedly criminal passions. In any case this was a violent reaction against the tenets and shibboleths of the period. Even if the stoutest heart quailed a little towards the end, the Victorian mind maintained or affected to maintain to the last, that it was possible to ignore evil out of existence. The *Æsthetic Movement* would by no means admit this. For it, as for the moralist, the evil was the more hateful for being ignored. It went, however, further than the moralist. Evil was an instrument of knowledge—necessary.

For it, contemporary society was the real criminal, because society was ignorant and blind. It believed also only in productive work and machinery, and the *Æsthetic Movement* certainly believed in neither.

Its point of view was therefore essentially criminal judged by contemporary standards. It defended indolence in the sense that the Victorians understood the term. It at least appeared to laud vice by drawing attention to it and acting the part. It cultivated a conviction of evil in exactly the same way that the Puritan was convinced of sin and the nineteenth century of respectability. Disillusionment was of a piece with the rest of the convention. The revolt was there, but it envisaged no reconstruction of society. It emerges, in fact, as a complete picture of super-refinement of criminality never far removed from its grosser but legitimate sister.

On the other hand, it was aristocratic and cultivated with a reverence for knowledge in sharp contrast with the growing philistinism of the time. Even its vice was vice intellectualized.

This is nowhere better shown than in Lionel Johnson's poem addressed to Oscar Wilde when he received a copy of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the following verses of which are quoted in Osbert Burdett's remarkable book, *The Beardsley Period*.

In Honorem Doriani Creatorisque Ejus

Benedictus sis Oscare !  
Qui me libro hoc dignare  
Propter amicitias :  
Modo modulans Romano  
Laudes dignas Doriano  
Ago tibi gratias.

. . . . .  
Amat avidus amores  
Miros, miros carpit flores  
Saevus pulchritudine :  
Quanto anima nigrescit,  
Tanto facies splendescit,  
Mendax, sed quam splendide !

There is hardly Christian or Catholic sentiment here. Yet nominally at any rate Johnson was a Catholic. Like Comte, however, in this respect if in no other, he may have been Catholic without being Christian. However this may be, and whatever deeper implications the verse may hold, it looks on the face of it like a glorification of the contemporary devil complete in hoof and horn. It is, to be frank, an apology for the "bad man," but great in his badness among a generation of little people fit neither for heaven nor hell. Here the point of view of the movement stopped short. There is lacking the fine optimism of Nietzsche, who saw evil as an intermediate evolutionary product which in the process of time became good. For him, crime had its uses as much as punishment.

It is in this sense justifiable to describe much of the literature of the movement as criminal. Oscar Wilde's book, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which inspired this poem, was frankly so.

He was essentially a dramatist, and the drama was the medium in which his best work was done. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, nevertheless, gives the clearest insight into its author's psychological and emotional make-up. The style is garishly and even rather grossly decorated—literary architecture in the baroque manner, and not the best baroque either. It has points of contact with the literary style of the criminal Wainewright. The resemblance is not marked. Wainewright lacked altogether Wilde's culture and brilliant technique, but the resemblance is there.

The story is an account of two instinctive criminals, Lord Henry and Dorian Gray. The first is a corrupter of youth, but he had excellent material to work upon in the second. The young man runs through the whole gamut of vices. He is idle and vicious of set purpose, and will stop at nothing, not even at murder. His friend, the artist who paints his portrait, is the victim. In spite of his excesses in every direction, the face of Dorian Gray never develops the stigmata of progressive vice. He remains always youthful and innocent in appearance. It is the portrait which changes, and bears as

it were vicariously those visible signs as symbols of its owner's evil living. Dorian hates the portrait and conceals it. The artist calls to see him one day, and in a fit of furious hatred Dorian murders him. He summons a young chemist whom he has power over owing to his knowledge of a guilty secret, and compels him to destroy the body by a chemical process. The story concludes upon what some have mistaken for a moral note. Dorian Gray continues in his evil courses and notes with increasing hatred the progressive degeneration of the painted face. He determines finally to destroy the portrait. Going to slash it with a knife in the garret where it is concealed, the knife is somehow turned upon himself. In death his face assumes the scars of corruption which the portrait had borne. The picture now appears as that of a young man.

This is not at all the conventional "bad end." There is no indication throughout the book that Dorian suffers anything at all except from wounded egotism. He suffers from the portrait not because of any conscientious scruple, but only on account of its being a mute reminder that vice has its ugly side.

The study of Lord Henry reveals a similar point of view. This man, while he has never placed himself within reach of the law, is completely devoid of any moral sense as the

expression is commonly understood. He obviously does not believe in morality.

But he and Dorian Gray and their creator do very obviously believe in knowledge. Lord Henry's theory of life is that it is good. Only by seeking every kind of experience and submitting to it can true knowledge be attained. Thus man became fitted for something, even if it were for hell. It is, after all, not entirely a novel point of view that recalls the rebellious words of Aucassin :

. . . But into hell I am willing to go ; for to hell go the fine clerks and the fair knights who have fallen in jousts and in ripe wars, and the skilled warriors and the brave men. With these I am fain to go. There also go the fair and courteous ladies who have two lovers or three and their lords also beside. And there go the gold and silver and the ermines and the grey furs ; there too the harpers and the rhymers and the kings of the world. With these will I too go, so that I may have with me Nicolette, my most sweet friend. (*Of Aucassin and Nicolette. Translated by Laurence Housman.*)

Essentially Oscar Wilde's crime was to live according to his principles. It is in this sense only that he was vicious of malice aforethought. He and his school had detected the underlying falsehood of the standard of their period. It was their retort and challenge to exclaim, "This is how you really are. We at least have the courage to live like that."

His life was one of conflict with society from

his youth up. It is asserted on the highest authority that his mother at the time of her pregnancy earnestly desired a daughter. When Oscar was born she was deeply disappointed. Lady Wilde addressed and treated her son like a girl and even went to the length of dressing him in girl's clothes for as long as possible, a fact which probably affected his whole life.

At school and at Oxford he took no part in games, but he was not lacking in courage. Wilde endured ragging with a good humour which frustrated his would-be tormentors. His apparent effeminateness concealed inflexible purpose to live his own life.

His career, however, was an objectified conflict with society due to his acute sense of isolation. This was aggravated by his intellectuality. Wilde hated the English utilitarianism which lauds practical intelligence at the expense of pure intellect. He was essentially an intellectual. But he was more. R. H. Sherard, one of the chief authorities on Oscar Wilde, and his friend, has said that he was really a man of action. His criminality was the resultant of the conflict between thought and action. His art was never an adequate means of sublimation and escape. Wilde, the man of action with genuine if mistaken courage, really tried to live according to his artistic canon. This was a necessary part of



his theory. Life, he had maintained, followed art.

The canon of his school was certainly a difficult and dangerous one to live by. It was preoccupied, almost obsessed, with the idea of evil. This began as a protest against the nineteenth-century point of view that it was possible and desirable to ignore everything which was of no immediate practical consequence. It has been and remains to some extent a typically English characteristic to disregard that which it cannot or does not wish to understand. From an intellectual perception of evil it was but a short step to conclude that experience was necessary to complete knowledge. The view, in fact, that to know good one must also know evil.

This goes a long way to explain the crime of Oscar Wilde and the contention that he was vicious of malice aforethought. There is no evidence at all that he was a pathological case or that he was sexually abnormal. The evidence on the contrary is all the other way. He married and had children. Wilde appears to have been a good husband who genuinely loved his wife. His feelings were certainly reciprocated, for his wife, who died first, stood by him to her life's end.

This brings us to the dreadful and tragic point of the trial itself. It is well to admit at

once that upon all legal standards, and even those of equity as they were understood at that time, the sentence was perfectly just. It is arguable that our system of jurisprudence is too crude an instrument to deal with the complexities of a rapidly developing civilization. There is in any case no doubt that circumstances may exist where condemnation which relies for support upon a merely utilitarian view of equity may be unjust. We require perhaps a little more psychology and a little less law. The question is a difficult one since any system devised to protect the majority is bound at some time or other to be unjust to the few.

However this may be, it was the duty of those responsible to administer the law, and Oscar Wilde was, according to law, justly convicted.

In March 1895 Wilde brought an action for criminal libel against the Marquis of Queensberry who, he alleged, called at his club and left a card with something written upon it implying or actually making a very gross accusation. He was persuaded to take this course when apparently under the influence of drink, while it is asserted by others that he was not in a normal frame of mind when he arrived at this decision. Neither of these explanations is in all respects satisfactory, though both may have been contributory causes.

It has been asserted that Wilde was a man of action, but he was in any case no mere weaver of theories. A philosopher would have ignored the noble marquis, but Wilde was no philosopher. His importance as a literary artist has been denied, he has been derided as a mere poseur. It is quite true that Wilde posed, but he made the pose his private and personal reality. He was absolutely sincere in that. It was his greatest and most solid achievement that he created a real atmosphere, believed in it, and in himself.

Such a man does not lightly pass over the judgment of one that he would have regarded as an intellectual and therefore a moral inferior, particularly a judgment worded in so crude a form. He adopted the obvious if unwise expedient of appealing to Cæsar.

Wilde lived bitterly to regret it, as he confesses in *De Profundis*.

The one disgraceful, unpardonable, and to all time contemptible action of my life was to allow myself to appeal to society for help and protection.

Here again his transcendentalized criminality emerges. The one unpardonable action of his life was to capitulate—for it was a grudging capitulation—to the society he disliked and despised.

The Marquis of Queensberry was tried and

acquitted, and as an inevitable result Oscar Wilde found himself in the dock.

There was at first disagreement among the jury, and a re-trial was ordered. Mr. Justice Wills presided at the second hearing of the case in May of 1895. The accused was tried on six counts, all, of course, of the same nature, and was found guilty on all. He was sentenced to two years' hard labour.

It has been suggested that there was prejudice against Wilde as indeed there may have been, but the judge's summing up was open to no objection. The nervousness which he is said to have shown during the hearing has been used to suggest that his conscience was troubled at the verdict. This is scarcely fair. It might equally be interpreted as an indication of his distaste at passing sentence upon so brilliant and talented a man.

There is doubt as to whether Wilde was in fact guilty upon all six counts. His own words seem to convict him of one.

"Five of the counts referred to matters with which I had absolutely nothing to do. There was some foundation for one of the counts."

Wilde faced his trial and imprisonment with dignity and fortitude. He lacked neither physical nor moral courage. He fell short of the highest pinnacle as an artist, but he cer-

tainly achieved greatness as he faced disgrace and adversity.

Wilde is an excellent illustration of the genius type. He is a man who essentially achieved greatness because and not in spite of his criminality. Wilde might never have been tried, never have been convicted, and never even have been guilty of his crime, but he would still in nineteenth-century standards merit nothing short of penal servitude for life. He and his school had examined the standards of the nineteenth century, found them as grass, and renounced them. The difficulties began for the movement when its intellect, so sincere in its apprehension of evil, failed in making a new synthesis and constructing a new kind of good. In the resulting confusion it is hardly surprising that Oscar Wilde and perhaps others came to the conclusion that intellect was the only good, and that to the emotions, providing they served intellect's cause, everything was permitted.

The twentieth century is drawing its richest sustenance from the aftermath of the *Æsthetic* Movement. Oscar Wilde and his companions are not really dead. The light and shadow of their knowledge and experience remains intermittently illuminating the direction the untrodden path in front should take. Something more is needed to direct us since what this

movement laid in ruins, it remains for us of this twentieth century to reconstruct on better foundations.

The nineteenth century did its best to kill art, the artist, and once and for all the intellectual point of view. It was met with a revolt which took theoretically and to some extent technically a criminal turn. Men of genius and of vision, thwarted and threatened, are liable to err in that direction. The twentieth century is at the cross-roads. It placed its trust as did the nineteenth—and because it must—in a mechanized civilization. But a mechanized civilization is no adequate excuse for mechanized art and morals. There is a very real danger that the twentieth century will perpetuate the errors of its singularly short-sighted and philistine predecessor. We are at the cross-roads and hesitate which turn to take.

The *Æsthetic* Movement was above all a theory of the art of living. Even if it were a theory of the art of bad living that is better than no theory of the art of living at all. The nineteenth century is perhaps unique in having had none. It remains for this present century to construct another and a better if it can.

There is great opportunity. The *Æsthetic* Movement overlooked the advantages of a mechanized civilization that can produce more

leisure. That it has not done so is due to the fact that the twentieth century is still under the influence of the shibboleth of the nineteenth, that leisure is immoral, even sometimes criminal, and hard work essentially a virtue. Work and leisure have no ethical values of themselves. Men should work to live, for it is living, and the art of living only, that has any ultimate importance.

It was really on account of this point of view that society punished Oscar Wilde and his friends. There is a danger that the twentieth century will do the same to their descendants, to its undoing. We are credibly informed by industrial magnates that Oxford and Cambridge—still seats of genuine learning for those who desire it—do not fit man for a modern career. Yet many promising young men still go up to Oxford and Cambridge, evidence if any is required that a "modern career" is not an aim and object universally prized. It is such who keep burning the torches of art and letters by practice or patronage according to their means. If the twentieth century takes the Philistine turn of its predecessor, the industrial machine will endeavour to crush them. But the love of the arts, of life, and leisure cannot be crushed but only driven under ground, where it is likely to turn into something very like hate of the oppressor.

The æsthetic-intellectual movement is immortal. It might again emerge in the unæsthetic form of a new but not necessarily peaceful type of revolution.



## THE CASE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE evil done by men certainly lives after them, but it is also true that some of them have gone down to posterity ornamented with virtues or disfigured by vices which in fact they never practised, so that they are remembered by reason of things said or done not typical of them at all.

It might with reason be suggested that Poe is among that company. He is remembered as a writer of grotesque and macabre tales, and it is open to doubt if he is remembered by the best of them. His literary technique was almost faultless, but his characterization artificial in the extreme. The horror is often overdone, and an effect of cheapness only escaped by reason of his superb technique. This applies also to his poetry. As a technical achievement *The Raven* is quite first-rate, but it lacks depth and insight, while breathing at the same time a sentiment both extravagant and meretricious. *The Raven* is remembered, but there are not many who are even aware that Poe wrote the following :

. . . Fell on the upturned faces of the roses  
 That gave out in return for the love-light,  
 Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—  
 Fell on the upturned faces of the roses  
 That smiled and died on this parterre, enchanted  
 By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.  
 Clad all in white upon a violet bank  
 I saw thee half reclining ; while the moon  
 Fell on the upturned faces of the roses,  
 And on thine own upturned—alas in sorrow !  
 Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—  
 Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow)  
 That made me pause before that garden gate,  
 To breathe the incense of these slumbering roses ?

Poe has no claim to the higher pinnacles of genius, but his extraordinary mind had that flexibility and scope which gives him a right to be regarded as something more than talented. It is a pity that it is his mediocre work which seems destined for immortality. As a critic he was unsurpassed, although so mordant and bitter that it is scarcely surprising that he made enemies on every hand. He even unmasked Longfellow. Longfellow perhaps deserved it ; but it was not at that time a very tactful thing to do.

Poe's mind was the antithesis of all that the *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* suggest.<sup>1</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Contemporary criticism tends to minimize Poe's value as a critic, and to suggest that his logic and clear-sightedness are more apparent than real. This perhaps arises from the modern tendency to regard the poet as an opportunity for a study in psychiatry. This approach has yielded interesting results, but it is one-sided, and occasionally very misleading.

was clear-sighted and logical, and there was even a mathematical precision about his conclusions. He applied his withering logic to poetic technique, and exposed poetic inspiration to the vulgar gaze. Without denying that inspiration existed, he insisted that the poet's original conception was generally completely altered by the time it was cast in rhythmical and metrical form, but he implied, in addition, with characteristic unpleasantness, that the poet was never honest enough to admit it. He had the restlessly curious mind of genius. Poe wrote essays on handwriting and cryptography, and solved several difficult cryptograms submitted to him. He indeed anticipated in some essentials the system applied to the examination of secret code to-day. His essay *Eureka*, if unsurely grounded in the physical sciences as they were then understood, does carry the indelible mark of something greater than talent. Poe was the pioneer of the modern detective story, and Robert Louis Stevenson owes much to *The Gold Bug*.

It should be remarked here that his detective story, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, actually referred to a murder case in New York, the victim of which was a young girl named Mary Rogers. By a process of pure induction Poe's detective, Auguste Dupin, solves the mystery. The case baffled the police at the time, but it

was afterwards proved that Poe's solution was correct in every essential. A large number of stories are concerned with crime either in the form of its commission or detection, an interesting fact to which further allusion will be made.

Poe displayed, in perhaps more definite a manner than in any known example, the phenomenon of double personality. This is well shown in the very conflicting opinions that have been expressed by those who knew him. Concerning most well-known men opinions not easily to be reconciled often find their way into print, but the conflicting evidence can generally be traced back to prejudice. In the case of Poe, however, there are the biographical notices of Willis and Griswold. Neither of these men was prejudiced against him, and indeed both had been his friends. But these two just and unprejudiced biographers literally describe two different people. Willis, whose note is very brief, seems to have been aware, by hearsay, of the other side of Poe's character, but he obviously comes to credit it but hardly. To Griswold, who had suffered a good deal at Poe's hands, it seems to have been the normal, or at least the usual manifestation. He is just throughout, but there is much that he cannot forget or understand.

Willis found Poe always industrious, quiet,

gentlemanly, and modest. As Griswold describes him, he appears anything but industrious, quarrelsome, vain, and given to drink. Poe was more than this. He performed at least one act which was definitely criminal and for which he might have received a long term of imprisonment had proceedings been taken. This fact can only be explained on the theory that in an altogether exceptional degree Poe was two men.

He recognized this himself. In the short story, *William Wilson*, regarded as being his best, there is much that is autobiographical. It is perhaps his best because the machinery is so intricate and so delicate, and so faultless. The psychology is as usual, at a charitable estimate, fifth-rate. His villains are always too deeply immersed in vice, his heroes (or heroines) fall too much into the category of those "who cannot do this thing."

William Wilson is a monster of vice. He is the criminal man as portrayed, and in a measure accurately, by the newspapers. From his schooldays up he encounters at the principal stages of his rake's progress a man like himself in personal appearance and deportment and similarly dressed, who warns him, and succeeds in frustrating much of his evil-doing. Wilson becomes increasingly impatient at this interference, and finally, at a masked ball, overcome

with fury, forces his double to a duel and kills him, realizing as soon as he has done so that he has killed his better self.

There is always something immature and naïve in Poe's delineation of character. His outlook upon the world and upon men and women has a curious affinity to the criminal's. He does not really understand men and women at all. His power resides in his quite exceptional and brilliant literary technique. If it were possible to consider his fiction shorn of its splendid ornaments of literary manner, many of his stories are exactly of the type the criminal would write. They deal very inadequately and inartistically with frankly criminal passions. *The Black Cat* and *Thou Art the Man* are particularly striking examples. In these stories, and in some others, he does describe criminal men as a criminal would describe them.

In the detective stories is to be seen the other, and the better, Edgar Allan Poe. These are merely brilliant but very interesting exercises in inductive reasoning. The crime is only incidental, the criminal simply is not there. They were probably cast in that form because then, as now, the detective story was doubtless popular. The most brilliant of all of them is *The Purloined Letter* which is not in any traditional sense a detective story at all.

This cleavage of personality indeed is as

evident in his literary work as anywhere else. The one personality was cultivated without being pedantic, far-seeing and acute, capable of a lofty flight, sensitive and artistic. The other was incredibly mean, vulgar, sensational. He wrote *Eureka*, the *Rationale of Verse*, and at least one beautiful poem of which a passage has been quoted. As an essayist—that upon furniture is a good example—at his best, he has seldom been surpassed. His efforts at humour are deplorable. His horrible stories are many of them merely horrible nonsense, by no means in faultless taste.

If his dual personality is evident in his writings it is yet more sharply apparent in his life.

His father, David Poe, belonged to one of the oldest families in Baltimore. He married an actress and as a result took to the stage himself without great success. His parents died leaving their children unprovided for. Edgar was born in 1811.

He was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Allan, who were wealthy and proved indulgent foster-parents up to a point. The Allans, however, were hardly suitable guardians for so sensitive a child. Mr. Allan was not above reminding Edgar—who on occasion perhaps deserved it—that he owed everything to his adoption, and was entirely dependent upon the Allans' grace.

Very early in life is to be observed a maladjustment to environment and a conviction of inferiority. Poe seems to have been, while a brilliant pupil, very unhappy at school. In 1822 he entered the University of Charlottesville, where he distinguished himself in scholarship, but he was expelled on account of his vicious behaviour from a university not noted for strictness in such matters. Poe returned to Mr. and Mrs. Allan, who again received him.

He quarrelled with Mr. Allan over his gambling debts and left for Europe. Like Byron, for whom he had a great admiration, he conceived the idea of volunteering to assist the Greeks against the Turks. Poe, however, never reached Greece, but he remained in Europe for a year, where he seems to have hovered on the borders of crime. He was actually involved in serious trouble at St. Petersburg, where he got into the hands of the police as the result of a drunken brawl. He escaped only through the intervention of the American Minister.

At this time he was apparently quite destitute of moral sense. He returned to America and was again received by the Allans. His wife having died, Mr. Allan had married a Miss Paterson. There was soon a violent quarrel, and Poe was ordered from the house. It appears that the fault was not entirely on one side, but in any case Poe did not emerge from



the affair with credit; he no doubt behaved disgracefully.

A little later he enlisted in the army as a private soldier. Attempts were made by his friend who had known him at the military academy to get a commission for him, but before the negotiations were completed it was found that Poe had deserted.

His first literary success was a prize awarded by the proprietors of the *Baltimore Saturday Visitor* for "MS. Found in a Bottle," in 1833, and he became the Editor of the *Messenger* in 1835. There is no question at all that he began soon after to drink heavily. Mr. T. W. White, the proprietor of the paper and his patron, addressed letters to him which place this beyond doubt. In 1837 his long-suffering patron could bear it no longer, and they parted company.

In 1836 he had contracted his extraordinary marriage with his cousin, Virginia Clemm. She was a beautiful girl, but only fourteen years of age. The poet had planned to marry Virginia when she was only twelve years old, but was prevented from doing so by the violent opposition of her family. Whether as the result of earlier excesses or constitutionally, it appears that Poe was sexually abnormal and probably impotent. This is curiously reflected in his writings. His women are absolutely unreal.

They have sometimes an unearthly beauty—Poe understood how to portray that—but no physical attributes at all. Sexually they are quite sterile.

Griswold puts it less baldly: "In poetry as in prose, he was eminently successful in the metaphysical treatment of passion."

His next venture was with the *Gentleman's Magazine*, to which he was first a contributor and then editor-in-chief. Mr. Burton, the proprietor, had a high opinion of his ability, but found him very unreliable. Owing to Poe's intemperate habits the journal was not completed on the day of publication and Burton had to prepare the copy himself. He remonstrated, and received in reply an insulting letter from his editor.

Worse was to follow. When absent some time later he returned to find the printers without a line of copy. Poe had used his subscription list and other documents, and prepared the prospectus of a new monthly with a view to supplanting him. This frankly dishonest act was too much. Burton went in search of Poe that evening, and finding him drunk, very naturally dismissed him.

In many matters he was careless to the verge of dishonesty, since he frequently borrowed money without hope of repaying it. On at least one occasion he stooped to blackmail.

Poe borrowed money from a well-known literary woman in South Carolina, promising speedy repayment. He failed as usual to honour the debt, and was asked for a written acknowledgment. Poe not only repudiated the debt but threatened to show correspondence which would blacken this woman's character if he heard any more upon the subject.

This was clearly a criminal offence, and for a time it looked as if a serious situation might develop. A brother of the lady hearing of the incident was furious, and expressed his intention of fighting a duel with Poe. The poet, however, retracted and apologized through the medium of his friend, Dr. Francis, pleading an excuse that he was "out of his head" at the time.

He may have been. No such correspondence existed, but blackmailers who have been perfectly sane have taken similar risks, and have succeeded. There is no evidence at all that Poe was mad before his final breakdown, and there is no adequate excuse for his conduct. Other less well-authenticated instances have been recorded, and it is impossible to escape the conclusion that Poe, on probably more than one occasion, put himself within the reach of the law.

He was accused by his contemporaries of arrogance. It is an accusation which can

hardly be squared with modern psychological views. That he suffered from an inferiority complex in its acutest form is very obvious, and his apparently arrogant nature is an index of it. A sensitive boy, he felt his position with the Allans very keenly; he never forgot that he was adopted and that he owed everything to them. There struggled also in him the traditional instincts of his well-connected father and those of his mother, who came from a different strata of society. In everything that he did is to be found that incompatible mixture of the cultivated and refined scholar, and the actor and showman.

Poe had a profound hatred of society. It was not a sublime hatred rooted in the conviction that society was corrupt and unjust to the individual. His attitude was plainly coloured with malignity and spite. Nor was he above regarding society as his legitimate prey. Some of the incidents recorded here supply proof, if any were required, that he did prey upon it, not with any lofty view, however mistaken, but to the same end as a criminal. He was accustomed to regard men as scoundrels. Even an apologist has said of him :

His changeable humours, his irregularities, his total disregard of everything and body, save the fancy in his head, prevented him from doing well in the world. The evils and suffering that poverty brought upon him soured his

nature, and deprived him of faith in human beings. This was evident to the eye—he believed in nobody and cared for nobody. . . . He became and was an Ishmaelite.

Poe was a better man than Wainewright, his intelligence was loftier and more brilliant, but it is difficult to resist a comparison. He had, to some extent, "that ingrained malignity of disposition" which kept him always on the confines of crime.

He was not apparently addicted to actual violence, although in his youth he was frequently concerned in drunken brawls. His tales, however, often treat of violence, and are an attempt at sublimation of his own subconscious inclinations.

The tale of *William Wilson* ends in violence. *The Cask of Amontillado* concludes with the incarceration of Fortunato in the wine-vaults by his one-time friend, Montresor, and the savage nature of his revenge seems to translate into action just the type of relief that Poe sought in his literary attacks upon real or supposed enemies.

It would be unfair to this extraordinary man to overlook the other Edgar Poe, the gentlemanly cultivated scholar. So he appeared to his biographer, Willis, to his wife and mother-in-law whom he devotedly loved, and to a few others, for the most part women. There is no doubt that these women brought out all that

was good in him—there was much—and inspired all the best of his verse. To those with patience and insight sufficient to suffer him he carried himself decently and with great gentleness and modesty. Willis undoubtedly loved the man and he seems to have been popular with all his colleagues in Willis' office. If for the most part he inspired dislike and distrust, he had also the faculty of making himself beloved if only exceptionally. Poe has been unfairly accused of a lack of industry. That he often neglected obvious duties is true, but he took extraordinary pains with all the literary work he did, and his style is a model of what a literary style should be.

It has been frequently asserted that he was mad, a contention for which there is very little evidence. His final breakdown was certainly mental; but it was insanity probably produced by his intermittent alcoholism. That his constitution was unusually intolerant of alcohol there is no doubt. It is true also that *Eureka* shows signs of approaching mental disturbance, but it contains also much of enduring value. Krutch, in his penetrating study, dismisses *Eureka* as the product of insanity, but his psychological demonstration, although interesting, does not always convince. The *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* are evidence of his sanity. There is more in them of literary

craftsmanship than of morbid imagination. That is where they fail. The effects are overdone, and induce the conviction of deliberate intention to horrify and surprise. He is best revealed in his essays and criticisms. They show an acute and exceedingly well-balanced mind.

Poe's very literary excellence provides certain justification for defining him psychologically as a criminal rather than a genius. His art did not prove to be an efficient medium for sublimation. It does not express him or his conflict. All his forces were directed towards perfection of technique. The point of view of the writer is curiously artificial and conventional. He praises and condemns according to the best traditions of the nineteenth century the morbidly artificial characters he creates. There is no satisfactory resolution of his conflict at all, only in a few of his letters does the real Edgar Allan Poe speak, both the Jekyll and the Hyde. He writes thus to a friend :

I have represented — to you as merely an ambitious simpleton, anxious to get into society with a reputation of conducting a magazine which somebody behind the curtain always prevents him from quite damning with his stupidity, he is a knave and a beast.

And again, in a letter addressed to Mr. Godey, which he rather naturally declined to print, concerning a certain Dr. English :

. . . What is *not false*, amid the scurrility of this man's statements, it is not in my nature to brand as false, although oozing from the filthy lips of which a lie is the only natural language.

In the midst of this violence there is a significant hint of Poe's brilliance as a controversialist. It will be seen that he does not directly accuse Dr. English of falsehood about *him*. It is a violent but a shrewd and subtle thrust. Dr. English's article was provocative and probably not entirely accurate. This was hardly to pour oil on the troubled waters. But he attacks his traducer at the weakest point.

So much for Hyde. But he could write thus to Willis:

I have not forgotten how a "good word in season" from you made *The Raven*, and made "Ulalume" (which, by the way, people have done me the honour of attributing to you)—therefore I *would* ask you (if I dared), to say something of these lines—if they please you.

His character resembled Villon's in some respects. In spite of his repeated lapses there were a few in whom he inspired unalterable affection, and to whom he gave in return all that was best, most passionate and lovable in his strange nature.

The death of his wife was so terrible a grief to him that he again took to drinking heavily, and thus hastened his death. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, who loved him devotedly,



was almost distraught with sorrow. She wrote to Willis:

I have this morning heard of the death of my darling Eddie. . . . I need not ask you to notice his death and speak well of him. I know you will. But say what an affectionate son he was to me, his poor desolate mother.

With a few exceptions, at his death literary America forgot his crimes, and strove to recall his real merits as a literary craftsman and his virtues, which most people during his lifetime were too exasperated or too righteously indignant to remember.

*Dé mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

## THE CRIMINAL CARDINAL

[[T has never been definitely proved, as Lombroso seems to have thought, that Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, was an epileptic and subject to frequent delusions, but the evidence there is is certainly in favour of the view. His medical history was bad, for his father was probably syphilitic and his mother thirty-five when he was born. One of his brothers was afflicted with dementia præcox and his sister died insane.

That his epilepsy is not a matter of certain fact is probably due to the elementary state of medical knowledge in the seventeenth century. He does not appear ever to have had a severe epileptic fit, and unequivocal evidence would have been necessary to diagnose an epilepsy at that time, but that he may have had slight attacks, than otherwise explained, is very likely. On the other hand, lack of evidence of a severe seizure is not proof that none took place. At a period when newspapers and reporters had not been invented, it was easier to keep secrets in high places than it is now. Even in the case of the Borgias there is not irrefutable

evidence in a single case that either Rodrigo or Cesare were actually guilty of poisoning, and murder is more readily out than isolated attacks of epilepsy even in the first Minister of France. On the whole, however, the indirect evidence is against any pronounced taint of epilepsy in Cardinal Richelieu. Epileptics, and particularly those of high intelligence, tend to undergo a phase of exaltation before an attack. Exaltation of this type does not square with the Cardinal's character and with his cold and calculating fanaticism, for Richelieu besides being a criminal and a genius *was* a fanatic, although in no religious sense.

That there was a strain of insanity in the man is certainly borne out by contemporary evidence. We may agree with Hilaire Belloc in viewing with great suspicion the fact that the widow of Louis XIV's brother asserted that the cardinal had frequent delusions during which he believed himself to be a horse, that he ran about on all-fours and neighed like one.

It sounds like a joke, and just the ill-bred type of joke that such a woman might have made. The assertion that the attacks were frequent almost suffices to discredit the evidence altogether. Men of genius do strange things, but those in such a position as Richelieu cannot repeat them frequently without exciting remark, and the Cardinal had plenty of enemies on the

watch to entrap him. A piece of evidence of that kind would have been very useful to them, and since it is definitely asserted that these strange antics took place in the presence of his servants, something surely must have leaked out at the time. It was not until sixty years after Richelieu's death, however, that anything was heard of this. The anecdote is even more improbable than that which describes how Lord Salisbury was once discovered by one of his servants before the window of his dining-room soliloquizing as he gazed at a fly crawling on one of the panes:

Oh little fly, oh little fly,  
If I were you, and you were I,  
Then I should be a little fly  
And you the great Lord Salisbury!

The internal evidence, as the higher critic might put it, is bad. No aberration nor poetic frenzy in Lord Salisbury could quite have achieved line two.

Returning to Richelieu, there is better indication of abnormal behaviour when he received the Cardinal's hat. Lombroso, rather uncritically, accepts all the evidence as being of about equal value. The matter of his elevation to the scarlet is by far the most important incident.

Long hoped and schemed for, it had been twice refused. An essential step towards his

devouring ambition to rule France, the suspense must have sorely tried his always unstable nerves.

Richelieu broke down, and for the time being became definitely insane. The nature of his delusions is not very clear, but they were probably those of grandeur. The syphilitic poison was at work. These were perhaps even the ultimate facts about Richelieu, his frightful will and the taint of syphilis, and the courage. He never, but under breakdown, showed anything of the fine drawn tortured nerves within. He somehow made of it all a dynamic synthesis, made the agonizing conflict physical and mental, the corner-stone of the tremendous edifice of his life and work. His was a megalomania controlled by the greatest intellect and the most indomitable will which Europe, with the possible exception of Napoleon, has ever seen.

His health was bad from his youth up. Richelieu endured almost perpetual headache, which frequently incapacitated him. He had an affection of the skin often associated with nervous trouble, and he was subject always to a general tendency to neurotic disturbance.

Of his character it might be said that it was the insane—in the sense that we propose to apply that term later—and the criminal Richelieu who was great. The other side of him was small and almost mean. He was

absolutely inhuman. It is doubtful if Richelieu ever loved a woman,<sup>1</sup> or a man either for that matter; for the sake of policy he would, however, undoubtedly have broken his vows of chastity—in the doubtful event of his being physically capable—with the same calculating precision and persistence with which he so brilliantly laid siege to La Rochelle.

His vanity is well known. It is perhaps nowhere better shown than in the portraits painted by Philippe de Champaigne. The head is distinguished but unshapely, and with his sickly yellow pallor he can scarcely have been good to look upon, but he had fine hands. In these two portraits it is obvious that Richelieu knows it, and makes the most of them. Quite indifferent to the hatred he inspired, he was yet extremely sensitive to satire in the shape of the pamphlet and lampoon which a man less vain would have ignored or taken good-humouredly. He had literary pretensions which his technique, excellent for its purposes, could lay no claim to.

These, however, are foibles quite commonly associated with great men. The methods by

<sup>1</sup> Despite traditional views to the contrary, it seems very difficult to associate Richelieu with any affair of the heart, who had no heart. Such "affairs" as he is credited with, if any are authentic, were probably those of policy rather than sentiment.

which he acquired private wealth are in another category. Richelieu was passionately avaricious and persistently dishonest in the means he used in the acquisition of wealth. He died the richest man of his time and his possessions had been obtained to a great extent by false assessments by his agents of the value of land in respect of which he had received more or less forced promises of concession. He condoned and practised bare-faced simony after the manner of the time, and he was a shameless pluralist.

This does not touch the essential criminality of Richelieu. But it is important as indicating how every aspect of his life and character ministered to his tremendous egotism. It was, to some extent at any rate, the product of his tainted blood as was that cerebral irritation which stimulated, if it did not actually inspire, the subtlest brain in Europe.

It is in this egotism that the true essence of Richelieu's criminality is to be found. He had an unquenchable thirst for power. To attain it he stopped at nothing, not even at forgery, and to retain his supremacy not even at murder. But these were incidental crimes. The essential element lies deeper still. The great Cardinal was the first modern man, and the creator of modern thought. The core of his criminality lies, from the point of view of his contempor-

aries—and criminality must be measured by contemporary standards—in his implacable enmity to the traditional social system.

It is now realized that the struggle of Catholicism and Protestantism did not really turn upon the sacrifice of the Mass. European civilization was built up upon the tradition of a Catholic culture which permeated the whole social order of Europe. Protestantism was regarded by it as a criminal revolt against good order, tradition, and the rights of property. And so indeed in a sense it was. That remarkable upheaval of the sixteenth century commonly known as the Reformation soon fell into evil courses. Originating with men of thought, it came to be directed by men of action who were not averse from enriching themselves at the expense of the old religion if the new seemed to provide them with an excuse. The medieval system had many gross faults; it was in dire need of reform. But those who held its property had legally at any rate a right to it, and the "reformers" were, upon their standard, criminal.

But out of this revolt was growing a new view of society, the purely secular view. The conflict resolved itself into one between the traditional opinion that communities were in a last analysis answerable alone to God and his Vicar, while the new view of society defended



an exaggeration of the traditional theory of the divine right of the secular prince. Some such view was necessary to the new property owners, and particularly to the princes themselves who had shared in the plunder.

At the time of the rise of Richelieu the conflict had turned once more in favour of the traditional order. The Austrian and Spanish Hapsburgs held something more than the balance of power in Europe, and both were invincibly Catholic. There remained with the exception of Scandinavia only England and France. England had made her own curious compromise; France remained torn with internal struggle between her young Catholic king and her powerful Huguenot nobles.

It was the consuming passion of Richelieu to rule France and make her supreme among European nations. In theory a Catholic and in fact a Cardinal, he held the Protestant view of the supremacy of the State. His genius was indeed to make the theory workable. The supremacy of the State meant the supremacy of Richelieu. His insane brother is said to have had delusions in which he believed himself to be God the Father. Richelieu's visions stopped short at the overturning of the old order, which it was within his power finally to re-establish, and the setting up of a new one, which is the perhaps unstable foundation of modern Europe.

Without scruples and entirely without conscience he attained his end.

Richelieu's career began at the age of twenty-one with an act of forgery.<sup>1</sup> He wished to be consecrated Bishop, since the Bishopric of Lucon was in the gift of his family, and his brother, who had determined to become a monk, had renounced the see without being consecrated. He was short of the canonical age by four years, but a letter had been written to Rome begging for confirmation of the King's choice of Richelieu. No reply had been received, so that Richelieu determined, upon advice, to go to Rome himself.

There is no question that to overcome the difficulty he made a false declaration of his age. The sole reason for doubting that this was confirmed by forged documentary evidence in which he substituted his own name for that of his brother on the baptismal register is that the document has not been discovered, but on the evidence of La Croix such a document undoubtedly existed. Further, although frequently granted, dispensation in respect of canonical age was an important matter and documentary evidence would have been required.

<sup>1</sup> Some authorities, among them J. B. Perkins and Richard Lodge, deny the authenticity of the evidence of forgery, but on the whole the balance of probability is in favour of it.

The extract from the Papal Brief quoted by Belloc seems to be conclusive: "*licet ipse sicut accepimus in vigesimo tertio aetatis anno.*" The Brief would hardly have been drawn up without substantiating documents.

On the other hand, it is curious that his age should be given as *twenty-three*. If there was to be a false declaration and forgery, Richelieu might well have saved all trouble by making himself of full canonical age. Yet this is perhaps merely early evidence of his subtlety of mind. At the age of twenty-three the dispensation would almost certainly have been granted. Since he had sworn to an age requiring dispensation the evidence would almost certainly be accepted, while it might have come under suspicion had he sworn to twenty-five, particularly having regard to the original letter addressed by the King to the Pope.

A career that was to change the destinies of Europe had begun.

Richelieu took up residence in Lucon towards the end of 1607 after a short residence at Court. He obviously considered a retirement to his diocese would further his plans better than to remain awaiting favours. His was an unerring instinct.

He administered the affairs of his diocese fairly and with great efficiency for three years. There he began his great policy of toleration

from which he never swerved throughout his life. Lucon had once been a Huguenot stronghold, but this troublesome and lawless faction had no reason to complain of their treatment at his hands. Richelieu was already thinking in terms of the unity of France rather than the unity of Catholicism. He had defended his policy of toleration in writings and sermons on the grounds that toleration was a more powerful instrument to win back heretics than coercive measures. Richelieu probably genuinely believed this; but he did not believe it as he believed in his policy.

There is no doubt that the assassination of his friend and patron, Henry IV, sincerely grieved him, but it did not prevent his writing a letter of most fulsome flattery to Marie de Medicis, Henry's widow. He flattered and cringed to the Queen Mother for five years.

It was thus that the Bishop got his foot upon the first rung of the ladder. There followed many years of patient flattery, lying, and intrigue which brought him at last to the head of the council in 1624. But it was not his ability for intrigue only. In the midst of incompetence, ignorance, and vacillation, Richelieu stood out as the one man of outstanding ability who was able to co-ordinate his immense ambition with the immediate needs of French national policy as he conceived it.

From 1621 to 1624 it seemed that the traditional culture of Europe must triumph. The Hapsburgs were everywhere in the ascendant; the wave of a rejuvenated Catholicism was rising. Upon his accession to power the nominally Catholic Richelieu deliberately checked its advance and thus destroyed once and for all the old civilization.

It is characteristic of the man that he condemns the vacillating policy of the council prior to his rise to power when he was in fact largely responsible for it. Without his prompting Marie de Medicis, who then had enormous influence with the King and Council, would have come down for the Hapsburg and Catholicism in the affair of the Valtelline and the Protestant Crusade. Richelieu played upon the French fear of Spain so that France, between fear of Spain and instinctive dislike of the Protestant, did nothing. The Cardinal, astute and unscrupulous, profits by the indecision and confusion.

Three weeks after he is rather insecurely in the principal seat of the Council. Pope Urban VIII is directly challenged to abandon the Valtelline forts. Upon the Papal refusal an army half Swiss Calvinist, half French, was immediately raised by Richelieu, and the Papal forts reduced. It was the first check to Spain.

A year later he negotiated the alliance with

England by the marriage of Henrietta Maria to Charles the First with a promise, however, of toleration for Catholics in England; this for the salving of his conscience and the quieting of Spain. The promise was not kept, but he made no protest. This was the second non-Catholic alliance, for, if England called herself reformed but Catholic and renounced Geneva, she was the bitter enemy of Rome.

Always Protestant alliances, Huguenot and Calvinist mercenaries, veiled hostility to Spain and Austria—it has been suggested that Richelieu in spite of this was convinced of the ultimate triumph of the traditional faith and culture. He was singularly short-sighted in this direction for so brilliant a statesman if he held any such conviction. At the crucial moment when the trembling balance of power was about to fall heavily in favour of tradition, Richelieu threw the whole weight of his incomparable diplomatic skill and his Protestant mercenaries on to the other side of the balance. His every move strengthened the hand of the revolution in favour of a new culture.

Why did he do it? It is difficult to plumb such depths, but he was essentially a man of to-morrow. If he believed in anything, he may have believed in the Catholic faith. That is very doubtful, but it is certain that he regarded the traditional social structure built on that

faith as being in ruins past repair. He saw that the religion of to-morrow would be nationalism fiercely opposed to the internationalism of medieval Europe where all men had been socially united under the Vicar of Christ.

He ran to embrace the new religion. I think there is no doubt that had he been obliged to choose between a united France and the destruction of European Catholicism, Catholicism would have been sacrificed. He was burning with the new fanaticism—France, *pro patria*, right or wrong.

Thus it appeared to him, but underneath it all the State of France meant Richelieu, Richelieu right or wrong; that was his megalomania, the ultimate and sinister inspiration.

His policy of preserving the apparent neutrality of France—in the curious sense that the term would then have been understood—was immensely successful. The King was solidly behind him, but Richelieu's position remained still very insecure. The Queen-Mother, Marie de Medicis, his one-time patroness, was bitterly opposed to him. There came on the eleventh of November, 1630, however, the famous "Day of Dupes" when the Cardinal finally established himself, and his enemies, including the Queen-Mother, retired in confusion.

This was the day of the Cardinal's triumph

and that on which he planned to consolidate his position by an act of murder.

The so-called trial and execution of Marillac was nothing else.

There were, in fact, two Marillacs, brothers, both henchmen of the Queen-Mother. The elder was destined to replace Richelieu when Marie de Medicis had got rid of the Cardinal, the other, a Marshal of France, was at that time with the army in Italy. Both were immediately arrested and thrown into prison. There, the elder brother died and it has been suggested that the Cardinal caused him to be poisoned. Nothing whatever exists save remarkable coincidence to support this opinion, and the most that can be said is that the manner of the unfortunate man's death remains uncertain. The younger brother was held in prison for eighteen months, and after an examination which is not worthy of the name of trial, was executed.

He was examined in Richelieu's private house by creatures of the Cardinal. Even they came to condemn him but hardly. The charges brought against him, if true, warranted nothing more than degradation and imprisonment, and the evidence in any case was grossly inadequate.

Richelieu was fully aware of this himself, and he left behind a feeble and inadequate apology for his crime. He had better have remained



silent. In this connexion even his ingenuity seems to have forsaken him.

We are told that Marillac was of low birth, and therefore unfit for his responsibilities as a Marshal of France and the organization of a great campaign. This even if true—and it was not true—would have been in the circumstances quite irrelevant.

It is suggested that he was guilty of treachery before La Rochelle for which there is no proof whatever.

The only charge of any importance against Marillac was that he had not administered the army funds with that scrupulousness now regarded as essential in a public servant. At worst the offence merited removal from his command and perhaps imprisonment. But in fact Marillac did nothing more than follow the corrupt contemporary practice. There is not even satisfactory evidence that he exceeded the convention in dishonesty. Although one of Marie de Medicis' men, it was not suggested that he had intrigued or plotted.

What was Richelieu's motive? His apologists have suggested that from the point of view of policy Marillac's death was necessary for the security of the State and for Richelieu. Marillac's execution was to prove to those intriguing in favour of the Queen-Mother what was in store for them. He was further a

dangerous man since he was in command of an army which might be turned in favour of the insurgents.

This is exceedingly thin. Had the Cardinal desired to make an example to strike terror into the hearts of other rebels, there were many others he could have chosen and others too against whom a more plausible charge of treason could have been brought. Again, had the trial and sentence been public, it might have had great moral effect, but so hole in the corner an affair must necessarily have fallen short. Indeed it might have had precisely the reverse effect and exasperated the supporters of the Queen-Mother into attempted reprisals. It is true that the plots of Marie de Medicis to seize Calais came to nothing, but it is difficult to believe that the murder of Marillac had anything to do with their failure.

His motive cannot certainly be known. He probably did sacrifice Marillac to intimidate his enemies, but was there also an underlying perhaps subconscious motive of malice? There was but one person for whom we are quite certain Richelieu had a genuine regard, even after she had quarrelled with him and striven to encompass his fall: it was Marie de Medicis. He had been her favourite. Not only had she turned against him but had chosen a substitute in the elder Marillac, a man by no means of

Richelieu's calibre. Richelieu was vain, and it probably embittered him. It is true that—if the elder Marillac was not poisoned by his direction—he made no attempt to destroy him, but there were no grounds. Richelieu had not in his case even the inadequate evidence which served to condemn his brother.

It remains as a possibility that Richelieu destroyed both brothers, and that his motive was revenge.

However this may be, the Cardinal, with Marie de Medicis and her supporters finally cleared from his path, found himself at last secure and in supreme control. This led up to the third and most dubious alliance (so to call it) of all, that with the Protestant Gustavus Adolphus. It was the most dreadful stroke at the old civilization, directed against the bruised but still formidable pride of Spain.

Ferdinand II backed by the Catholic League, the army under Wallenstein and his perfectly just, if unwise, Edict of Restitution was striving to unite Catholic Germany. He reckoned without Richelieu. Fearing the encircling movement of Austria, the Cardinal bribed Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, with what would now be equivalent to about £500,000, to hold Austria in check. He had sown the wind. Saxony and Bavaria were to reap the whirlwind.

The results are well known. Gustavus Adolphus was no mere bandit, but a military genius of the first order. He did his work only too well. The army of the Catholic League was cut to pieces at Brietenfold. Bavaria is ravaged, and Gustavus Adolphus pushes on towards the Rhine. The Catholic garrison of Mayence falls. . . .

Gustavus was not out only for plunder. He was as fanatically for the new order as was Austria for the old. He wished to unite Germany for Protestantism. He had already made a unity under Catholicism impossible.

In 1632 Gustavus Adolphus negotiated with Richelieu for a partition of religion and the spoils. France was to hold the left bank of the Rhine, while the King of Sweden was to have unhampered control on the other side.

It will never be known how nearly Richelieu came to accepting these conditions, but it was very near. Nor is there much evidence to suggest that it was any scruple of conscience regarding the annihilation of Catholicism beyond the Rhine. He had probably come to the conclusion that Gustavus Adolphus was too dangerous a neighbour, as indeed he was. Even then he might have accepted the terms which meant peace in Europe and the ascendancy of France had it not been that his closest diplomatic colleague, Father Joseph, who was

strongly opposed to the settlement, succeeded with great difficulty in dissuading him. It was this Capucin monk who prevented the extinction of Catholicism in one half of Europe.

But as it was, the new order had triumphed. Catholicism as a civilization and social order was dead. Peoples were becoming nations. The seed of new loyalties had been sown in men's hearts quite alien to loyalty to the Catholic order. But it was to grow, all the same, among those who professed the Catholic Faith. The spirit of Richelieu, the innovator, had prevailed.

In the succeeding years the Cardinal began to feel the strain. His policy had consolidated France as a nation, and for that very reason he was forced to an open issue with Spain. In 1636 almost everything seemed lost, Richelieu's reason included. But he made a marvellous recovery. In 1638 fresh French troops were raised at terrible cost and Brisach, the key to the situation, fell to the Protestant Bernard, France's ally. The tide had turned. Again good fortune. Bernard died and his successor was persuaded by his principal general, as luck would have it a French subject, to hand over Brisach to the French. The Cardinal's work was almost miraculously finished. France held the left bank of the Rhine.

Four years later Armand-Jean du Plessis,

Cardinal de Richelieu, tortured with a painful skin disease, paralysed of the right arm, assailed with virulent pneumonia, but indomitable and in the ascendant to the end, passed to his rest.

Both directly and indirectly Richelieu's crimes—but a tenth of them probably are recorded or even suspected—were an essential part of his genius. Even the meanest of them were directed to one end—the satiation of his devouring egoism which found its lofty manifestation in guiding the destinies of a united, a “national” France. To accomplish this aim he destroyed the old Europe and laid the foundations of the new one. He is yet another illustration of the individual in conflict with his environment who could find no peace except in destroying it and erecting another after his own desire. There was nothing medieval about Richelieu, and the medieval atmosphere would have stifled him. The triumph of Catholicism would have meant the re-establishment with some modifications of the medieval social system. His upholding the unity of France before any other consideration testifies more eloquently than could any words to his social faith, the new world of Richelieu, which was quite alien to medieval theories of living.

In times so out of joint, he may perhaps be

excused the conviction that to genius all is permitted. There is an aspect of the Cardinal's character not to be overlooked. He knew his immense capacity. He was faced with the opposition of traditionalists and greybeards who were for tradition, respectability, and safety first, a conservative inertia, in that day as in our own, the most dangerous of all policies. That was one of the causes of the failure of the traditional reaction. It could not command the complete loyalty of such great minds. Those who with a gibe called Richelieu the "Cardinal of the Huguenots" spoke in their mockery a greater truth than they knew. He assessed the vitality of Protestantism aright even if he deplored its element of *sans culotte*. It found some echo in whatever it was that served Richelieu in place of a heart. The greatest man of his day, he despised and disliked the traditionalist fatigue and inertia.

But he dealt Europe a dreadful wound. It is of interest to speculate what would be the condition of Europe to-day if the Catholic reaction of the seventeenth century had succeeded. Many in this twentieth century without belief in the Catholic faith or sympathy for it recognize in the Reformation an unparalleled catastrophe. It rent Europe in twain and destroyed the unity of the cultural tradition. However embarrassing the conclusion may be,

it remains true that Catholic Christianity was the basis of European culture, and that the western civilization owes it an unextinguishable debt. Scepticism, so common a feature of to-day, would be as widespread had Protestantism never arisen. Science has seen to that. But to disbelieve is not necessarily to despise. We should now be living in the midst of the grateful twilight of those venerable idols to which our fathers, and we, by inevitable inheritance, owe so much.

Protestantism has contributed nothing to Europe of cultural importance. It certainly did not carry on the learning of the Renaissance which Catholicism might have absorbed to the benefit of both. It has proved no less fanatic and obscurantist, but rather more so, than its more venerable predecessor.

That which it did create was the modern state with its bitter animosities due fundamentally to sharp divergence of cultural tradition, incompatibilities which remain long after the dogmas which produced them ceased to have significance. The formidable and dangerous problems which face a sorely tried Europe to-day can be resolved only by means of a co-ordination which seems impossible of achievement.

It is impossible of achievement largely on account of the cleavage of tradition. Catholi-



cism and Protestantism now mean very little to the majority of Europeans. In a hundred years they will mean much less, but the opposing traditions remain; they are in the very blood of Europe.

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that there is a sense in which Richelieu was responsible for the horrible and quite meaningless catastrophe of 1914. Richelieu has been dead for nearly three hundred years, but truly the evil that men do lives after them.

## THE CASE OF AUGUST STRINDBERG

IF versatility were the sole criterion by which to judge genius, Strindberg would on that score alone stand high among great men. He is probably unique among Europeans in having learnt Chinese without having visited the country. Hewas a playwright, novelist, botanist, chemist by turns, and an artist of some ability. What is more remarkable still, Strindberg, who was first and foremost a literary artist, made contributions to science which were not without importance.

His knowledge was eneyelopaedic, his intellectual seope colossal, but his claim to genius does not reside in these things alone. He was, however, without doubt one of the greatest men, if not the greatest man, of the nineteenth century.

Strindberg was born in Stockholm in 1849. He was actually conceived out of wedlock, but the union of his parents was legalized before his birth. His father was a grocer but claimed aristocratic antecedents. His mother was a servant girl.

He was an extraordinary boy and declared

to be an idiot at school. Nothing is more remarkable than to note that an average alienist observing him at this time would undoubtedly have prophesied for him a criminal career. He refused, as criminal children do, to submit to the ordinary discipline of learning, and he was no doubt a very difficult pupil. Strindberg was, in fact, brilliantly precocious, but he wished to learn in his own way, and the pedantic methods of the conventional school appeared actually to paralyse his mind.

He won, at his second school, which seems not to have been so distasteful to him, the white cap of Gymnasist, the preparatory step to the university.

Sexually, he appears to have been precocious since at the age of fifteen he had a love affair with a French woman of thirty. To what extent it was platonic, as it is generally reported to have been, is difficult to judge; but it is probable that there was no physical consummation, or if it were attempted, it failed. This conclusion is suggested by the correspondence which passed between them. It shows evidence of determined sublimation since the correspondence is full of the struggle against sin and redemption through Christ. The affair ended as the result of parental opposition, and a sharp transference upon religion followed for some time. Strindberg did all that he could to convince him-

self that he was of the elect, and the loved of God.

But from his early years he was sceptical and definitely even violently antisocial. Strindberg tells a curious story as to his early doubts concerning the efficacy of the Blessed Sacrament. When stopping in the house of the sexton he one day consumed a number of the stamped wafers prepared for the Communion. They were insipid and the Sacrament was insipid to him thereafter.

His early life was a bitter struggle with environment. His parents were poor and the family numerous. In after-life the memory of the family called forth bitter invective. To him it was an immoral institution where children were tortured, and their will-power crushed. It was a charitable institution for lazy women.

Family life became more bearable as its economic situation improved. Things were much better when he went to the university. Strindberg was, however, no more a success there than he had been at school. He could not or would not study. Even at that early age he was unable to take anything on trust, and he found the professors ineffective and ignorant. He had the reputation of also being more than usually dissolute.

These years were, nevertheless, most significant ones. He became interested in the stage,

and acted one or two small parts. It was a preparation for the production of drama some of which has probably never been excelled. By a curious inversion his preoccupation with religion continued, but in a violent anti-christian sense. In his twentieth year he began to write a play which was never finished, called *Jesus of Nazareth*, intended to aim a crushing blow at Christianity. In his autobiography he also alludes to another, a burlesque of the life of S. Peter.

It is remarkable that Strindberg seems to have kept out of really serious trouble at the university, and that he escaped any actual collision with the law. But it was by an ace only. He was on one occasion involved in a riot resulting from an encounter between an angry crowd and the police. He personally struggled with a policeman, who had arrested one of the rioters, and made the prisoner's escape possible. Strindberg escaped also himself in the general confusion.

He had no more sense of shame than a Vidocq or a Villon. The only possible defence of the language of some of his books is its absolute sincerity. He despised current views of morality, and all accepted standards of respectability he fiercely hated. Having rejected Christianity, he allowed himself complete licence, and he minutely describes his drunken orgies

and, with a certain gusto, dissects his sexual experiences.

Then came his first success.

He had written a play called "Blotsven" and afterwards burnt it. Later, however, it emerged rewritten as *The Outlaw*. A short analysis of this play shows very definitely the trend of his mind at this time. It is one which, finding different expression in different individuals, is common to the psychology of genius.

Strindberg is himself represented as five different characters in the play. The fighting earl, the singer of ballads who surveys the mystery of life, the revengeful mother who at last cannot consummate her revenge because her sense of sympathy and pity intervenes, the daughter who parts from her father on account of her love for a heathen, and the unhappy lover. The whole play is an apology for doubt. An assertion that there is no absolute standard of right and wrong. Evolution is the result of doubt, and it is for this reason that society hates the doubter. It does not wish for change and evolution. Doubt is one of the elements which distinguishes man from the lower animals. It is the stupid who are sure, and who act upon tradition and impulse.

The play is obviously a defence of the individual at variance with society. It was very coldly received by the critics, who accused the

author of having borrowed from Ibsen. Curiously enough, however, the play attracted the attention of the King of Sweden, Charles XV. This was largely due to its theme, the struggle of the old Viking religion with Christianity. The King, himself a poet, was very interested in the revival of the Saga, and the play had attracted him for that reason. He received Strindberg kindly and rewarded him from his Privy Purse.

This play determined the trend of Strindberg's art and indeed his life. In every book, play, or essay that he wrote the theme reappears in one form or another; the revolt of the individual against society.

The criminal motive might almost be said to enter as such in his novel, *By the Open Sea*. In this book Strindberg describes the life of an intelligent man, a Government Superintendent of Fisheries, among the uneducated fisher-folk in the East-Skerries. This account revives in another form the conflict between society and the individual. The fishermen look upon the Superintendent as an interloper who has arrived to interfere with their business, and they will not believe that he has come with his scientific knowledge to help them to increase their catches of *strömming*. Borg, however, does not show any more tact than they. He dislikes and despises them all, and he shows it. If ever a

man were out of his element, Axel Borg was that man. Strindberg has made terribly real the atmosphere of antagonism and hatred.

The most illuminating part of the book, however, is the account of Borg's childhood, education, and his views on life.

He divided, for instance, humanity into three subdivisions; the conscious, the self-deceivers, and the unconscious.

The conscious, or initiated, formed the highest class; they had seen through the fraud, believed in nothing and nobody, were generally termed sceptics, and were hated and feared by the self-deceivers; they recognized one another at once when they met, and called each other "scoundrel" when they parted, each one ascribing to the other base motives. (*By the Open Sea.*)

Strindberg understood the psychology of genius very well. They were the higher class, hated and feared by ordinary members of society and were, on each other's own showing, scoundrels.

The book traces pitilessly the struggle of this man with society. There is a woman in it, Marie, who comes into Borg's life. She is like most of Strindberg's women, sensual, stupid, and selfish. Marie is indeed the symbol of the respectable upper middle-class society which raised the fiercest of Strindberg's fierce antagonisms. She also tries to subdue him and actually enlists the help of the islanders. They quarrel



and break their engagement; but that night before she goes away Marie yields everything to Borg. He remains behind on the island alone.

And society wins. Borg is condemned for knowing more than the men and women who live by rote. His observations have shown them how to revive the falling *strömming* industry. He has predicted, rightly, the advent of salmon. Borg gets credit for nothing. Gradually under the stress of loneliness and antagonism his mind gives way. He recovers his sanity only on Christmas Eve to sail out into the open sea to his death.

Strindberg concludes the book with a characteristically violent and contemptuous reference to the religion which society professes, hypocritically as he believes, to hold in great reverence.

Away, to meet Hercules, who had released the light-bringer, Prometheus, who was the son of a god and a human mother, perverted by his savage detractors into the child of a virgin, adored at his birth by milk-drinking shepherds and neighing donkeys.

In the stark autobiography of *In the Red Room* (1886) the reader is invited to consider the furious anger and jealousy of the poet betrayed by society in the form of a woman whom he loves but who has been unfaithful to him.

He wanders out into the forest and all the

mistakes and delusions of humanity which cause it so much suffering rise before his mind. He challenges fate and defies it. Rushing through the forest, he breaks down the branches of trees and crushes fungi under his feet. With a stick he beats the young junipers and treads them down.

He climbs upon an eminence of rock, and looks down upon the pine forest. Moved by the wind, the pines whisper like a murmuring crowd. The man from his eminence defies them. "Jesus or Barabbas," he roared. "Jesus or Barabbas."

And then receiving no answer. "Barabbas, of course."

Finally there is a penetrating analysis of his state of mind.

His consciousness, which saw through the nothingness of life, wanted to see no more. It preferred to live in illusions, like the sick man who wanted to believe that he will get well and therefore hopes it.

In this passage is to be observed the point of view of the criminal as it were transcendentalized. It is very obviously there, the choosing of Barabbas, the rejection of the hypocritical ethics of society.

Commenting on this passage, L. Lind-af-Hageby says:

Was he mad? The school of psychologists which sees in every manifestation of genius irritable evidence in favour

of a verdict of insanity will conclude that he was. There is urgent need of a psychological restatement of the supernaturalities of genius. The wild outburst of the world's intuitionists, the devouring fire of their creative passion, must ever remain unintelligible to soul-paupers and those whose cerebral activities are strictly dependent upon the presence of print. But genius may expect better understanding from those who give careful thought to the processes of mind, and who should have penetrated beyond the definitions of "sane" or "mad."

This is a shrewd thrust at certain schools of psychiatry.

The passage is quoted here to remind the reader that when the word abnormal has been used in this book in connexion with genius emphatically it does not mean mad. The question is of importance. If genius is madness, it would be absurd to discuss its criminal aspect.

If any doubt remains, in *Lady Julie* the criminal problem formally appears. There is the same useless, sensual woman, this time the daughter of a Count. She attends the mid-summer dance in the servants' quarters on S. John's Eve. *Lady Julie* offers Jean, who is her father's valet, a good deal of attention. Her father is away. Left alone in the kitchen with the valet, she encourages him to make love to her. He hesitates at first, but she taunts him with being afraid, and tempts him.

The pair escape to Jean's room to avoid the crowd returning to the kitchen. When the

revels are over they reappear. Jean has a plan that they should leave that night for Switzerland or Italy and start an hotel. He is certain of success, but the girl cannot catch his mood ; she wants love and sentiment as she understands it.

Jean suggests that since neither has any money she can steal it from her father's room. Julie is afraid to do this, and it is now the man's turn to taunt her. She ultimately consents and takes the money. When about to leave the house they quarrel furiously over a greenfinch which the girl wants to take with her. Angry at her sentimentality, Jean kills the greenfinch.

The Count returns, and both know that the theft will be discovered. The girl is distraught with fear and shame and can come to no decision. She asks Jean what to do, and he coolly hands her a razor. She leaves the kitchen and kills herself.

This play is quite clearly a study of the criminal man and a weak and decadent woman upon whom he preys. Jean allows himself to make love to the girl for the sake of the possible advantage it may bring him. He induces her to steal money to further his projects, and when things go wrong he suggests to her with the most eloquent and unmistakable gesture that she should commit suicide. Jean is, in actual fact, both thief and murderer.

The portrayal of such a situation is not necessarily significant in itself until it is realized that the author's sympathies are all with the man. To Strindberg, Jean represented reality. He knew his place in society, he knew what he wanted, he even knew how to submit to law and order when he wished. One of the most telling situations in the play is the suddenness with which Jean becomes again the perfect valet after Lady Julie's suicide. It must be admitted that Strindberg does not exactly sympathize with Jean because of his criminal behaviour. Rather it is that he has been the instrument of eliminating the representative of a type that Strindberg frankly loathes, and that is, he considers, a danger to the race. Such people mate with degenerate men and produce worthless children. But when all this is granted, it yet remains true that the play does not condemn Jean; it more or less condones his acts. He emerges as a type in spite, or perhaps even because of his criminal acts, which deserves to survive.

This is not to say that Strindberg had no standards. He had, even if he refused to accept the conventional ones. There were, as he said himself, Crimes and Crimes. This is the title of another of his plays. It is particularly interesting because it has a direct bearing upon an incident in his own life.

Maurice, a successful dramatist in Paris, deserts his mistress and child for Henriette, a woman bent on pleasure. The two are so deep in their passion that they wish death to Maurice's child. Next morning the child does die mysteriously. Foul play is suspected and through a conspiracy of circumstances Maurice is accused of the murder. By good fortune he escapes conviction, but not his conscience. At the close of the play, he is talking with an Abbé who tells him that although he has escaped he is really guilty since he did will the death of his child. The Abbé reminds him that we are responsible for our desires, thoughts, and words, as for our acts.

The incident in his own life which probably inspired this play is best described in his own words.

His second wife had been Fräulein Frida Uhl, a young Austrian girl whom he married in 1893. They parted in Paris in the summer of 1894. He remained in Paris to conduct chemical experiments. Strindberg became after a time terribly lonely :

A devouring curiosity, an outbreak of perverted love, caused by my frightful loneliness, inspired me with an intense longing to be reunited with my wife and child, both of whom I still loved. But how was this to be brought about as divorce proceedings were on foot ? Some extraordinary event, a common misfortune, a thunderbolt, a conflagration . . . in brief some catastrophe which unites

two hearts, just as in novels two persons are reconciled at the deathbed of a third. Stop! there I have it! A sick-bed! Children are always more or less ill; a mother's fear exaggerates the danger; a telegram follows, and all is said.

I had no idea of practising magic, but an unwholesome instinct suggested I must set to work with a picture of my dear little daughter, who later on was to be my only comfort in a cursed existence.

Further on in this work, I will relate the results of my manœuvre, in which my evil purpose seemed to work with the help of symbolical operations. . . . I continued my work with a feeling of undefined uneasiness, and a foreboding of fresh misfortune. (*The Inferno.*)

He was convinced that, as a consequence of his action, misfortune came.

In the course of the spring, while I was feeling depressed by my own and my friend's untoward destiny, I received a letter from the children of my first marriage, informing me that they had been very ill in hospital. When I compared the time of their illness with my mischievous attempt at magic, I was alarmed. I had frivolously played with hidden forces, and now my evil purpose, guided by an unseen Hand, had reached its goal, and struck my heart. (*Loc. cit.*)

It is remarkable that this convinced sceptic became as superstitious as any criminal. This is but one example of his belief in occult powers and magic. That, however, is by the way. Strindberg here actually accuses himself of a crime. In extenuation it may be said that he did not share the popular opinion that an

essential part of any crime consists in being found out.

Strindberg's life and art agree very well with the definition of genius which has been suggested. He suffered from inferiority due to unsatisfactory environment. A man of courage and determination, he struggled to free himself, and he succeeded. His early environment, all the same, left its mark upon him. He hated society, and it is that very hatred of society which so profoundly inspired his writings. This appears in one form or another in all the examples which have been quoted. It bursts out in new and unexpected ways throughout his works. After the tragic failure of his first marriage he wrote *Married*, a book which was impounded while author and publisher were called upon to answer a charge of blasphemy and obscenity. It should never have been brought, but to Sweden's honour it must be recorded that the charge failed.

Without his literary genius Strindberg might have become a criminal. He certainly portrays himself as Jean in *Countess Julie* and as Maurice in *There are Crimes and Crimes*. But he transcended the criminal point of view as all genius must. He had no wish to prey upon society for the sake of gain. There are some great intelligences which have shamelessly done this, but he would have preyed upon society



solely with the idea of destroying what he regarded as a corrupt institution. Although his method of life does not always suggest it, his problem, from start to finish, was an ethical problem. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

There are a good many who would roundly assert that Strindberg was a criminal in fact. During his lifetime he was styled the corruptor of youth. It is certainly true that he knew how to destroy illusions, his own and those of other people, without being able to replace them with others more useful. Perhaps he did not live long enough. A critic has said of him that "towards the end of his life, the storm has subsided. The sun shines and the sea is calm though strewn with wreckage." There was no time left to build afresh.

The conflict survived almost to his life's end. He came at last to embrace a strangely individualistic interpretation of the religion he had so much derided and despised. It was no fear of the future which caused him to do this. Always an iconoclast and bandit in the spiritual sense, he had endured too much in this life to entertain any craven fears of the next. Not for him the facile escape of a death-bed repentance. But the conclusion had been forced upon him that forces were at work in the universe which man defied in vain. An individualist

before everything else, he individualized them. To the last woman remained unforgiven—he had suffered too much at her hands—nor did he attain to any faith in man, and to faith in August Strindberg least of all. Some of the concluding words of *The Inferno*, cynical and mordant, show him as an uncompromising realist to the last :

Such then is my life ; a sign, an example to serve for the improvement of others ; a proverb, to show the nothingness of fame and popularity ; a proverb to show young men how they ought *not* to live ; a proverb because I who thought myself a prophet am now revealed as a braggart.



## PROBLEMS



## ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT

THE discussion of any criminal or criminal problem of the Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is to raise at once the difficult issue of perspective. It is, of course, obvious that the penal or even the moral code of our times cannot be made the basis of our criterion. This is true not only of Italy and of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but of all Europe during that period and after it. But in the case of Europe as a whole, and the medieval period as a whole, the difficulty of perspective is not so great. The essential feature of criminality as the revolt of a certain type of individual against society remains as a broad criterion. But Italy, at a time when the tendency throughout the rest of Europe was towards national consolidation, was still more or less in a state of anarchy. Anarchy differs from revolution in the sense that it can have no social standard. The revolutionary has. It may be from the conservative's point of view something impractically Utopian, or on the other hand criminal, but it aims at something.

Anarchy is rather that condition of mass confusion, mental, moral, and intellectual, which seems inevitably to emerge at certain stages of social evolution. There is as yet no satisfactory explanation of this; but only the vague generalization that civilization breeds within itself the germs of its own destruction.

Be this as it may, the relevant consideration centres from the criminological point of view upon those who rise to the top of the anarchistical ferment. In this connexion a very interesting fact is at once apparent. Normal social standards become reversed. The greatest criminals rule. But what is more important, their rule is necessary, for only they possess the necessary qualities to impose upon the confused masses conditions—however evil in themselves—which avert complete social paralysis, chaos, and destruction.

In such circumstances conventional estimates of what constitutes satisfactory social behaviour, or even common morality, are seriously disturbed, and the approach towards a formal definition of criminal behaviour becomes extremely difficult. Even to attempt a definition is to court so many dangers as to make the task almost impracticable.

There is more promise in the contrary approach, in the study as example of the

non-criminal, or what would have been non-criminal, in the light of its reaction to events and individuals whose good or evil is very difficult to assess.

This line of approach might do something to throw light upon the very baffling mystery of Lucrezia Borgia, concerning whose character, personality, and crimes, real or supposed, it has been very difficult to arrive at any conclusion.

In times of transition and stress there are always two opposed factions, the "glorious and unquiet spirits" (as Cranmer said) in search always of something new, and the conservative, equally a fanatic of reaction or the *status quo*. There remains the large body of unformed opinion which stands apart and asks for nothing more than what we are accustomed to describe as a quiet life. But the conflict is not to be ignored. These reap the tares of strife and confusion, and the changing centre of gravity of social values, moral and intellectual, disturbs the normal equilibrium of their peace.

In this twentieth century—period of transition and revolution—such conditions are to be observed in the ambiguity which obtains concerning all social questions and particularly transcendental religion, marriage and the family, and relations of the sexes. It is further



appropriate to remark that this ambiguity and confusion is reflected in the masses rather than in the factions. A faction may be wrong but it is not generally ambiguous, and the theories, social, political, and intellectual, of one or other will ultimately prevail, and for good or evil stabilize the contemporary hysteresis.

History repeats itself. So that it is not surprising to find throughout Europe, but particularly in Italy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a condition of things—allowing for differences of temperament and period—not incomparable with our own. The business of transition had begun with the discovery and studies by intelligent and pious men of the classical literature and philosophy. Europe was intellectually re-stimulated as it was in the nineteenth century re-illuminated by the beacons of science. Such sudden and great effulgence tends to dazzle and confuse. It produced trouble in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as it has again in our own time.

In the light of these considerations the manners and morals of the later phase of the Renaissance are not so difficult to interpret. It produced insincere kind of free thinking of a very cynical order which made it possible for poets to write sonnets that associated the

Virgin Mary with Venus, and made offerings to harlot and saint almost in the same breath. Much of the drama and comedy of the Renaissance was such as would scandalize us to-day; and there was Aretino, whose romances and epigrams—he was fond of describing the life of the contemporary nunnery—are almost incredibly salacious. He was, it is true, severely censured by the Church, but this perhaps rather because his satire was well aimed than from moral indignation. The greater the truth, the greater the libel.

Even the orthodox attitude was curiously inconsistent. With a cynicism, perhaps scarcely conscious, it was held that a theologian might hold one opinion in philosophy and another precisely opposite in theology. And indeed the majority of the most brilliant theologians and philosophers of that day—and they were very brilliant indeed—were thus divided in intellectual loyalty.

But the fire of the passion for knowledge blazed and eclipsed with its brightness the dazzling confusion it produced. There has never been in Europe such an eager thirst for knowledge and learning nor, in spite of all, such a reverence for it. It throws the confusion into even sharper relief. Lorenzo the Magnificent could indulge in tavern brawls and encourage his singing men to frequent

the streets at night declaiming obscene lyrics with music. He was, in every direction, a debauchee. But he could and did debate upon philosophy with the most skilful. He wrote graceful sonnets, and he was a munificent patron of art. Lorenzo is but a type of those bandit princes of Italy in whom—it is a synthesis we cannot easily appreciate to-day—real genius and monstrous criminality appear naturally to mingle. Such were the men who ruled in Church and State, inevitable but salutary scourges of times when it had been forgotten in the ecstasy of the search for knowledge that bulwarks of social stability might be necessary to secure its fruits.

In the face of this orgy of brilliant and intellectual criminality the voice of reaction in the guise of reformation was not entirely silent. There was Savonarola. He was, in spite of his intellectual equipment and the modern gloss upon his philosophy and theology, a reactionary man. He died unjustly, perhaps, as a felon.

And in the political field there arose out of all this turmoil the great figure of Niccoló Machiavelli, who for the first time made articulate and even, with his subtlety, something more than plausible, a theory which had not been accepted before in Christian Europe without a gloss—the doctrine that the

morality of rulers has nothing to do with the morality of the ruled.

And how fared the ordinary man and woman with affairs at such a pass? By a curious inversion circumstances of this kind favour the mass production of a criminal habit of mind. This tends to follow the licentious example of high places while lacking that purpose and sense of direction which makes the great in such circumstances something more than criminal. The ordinary social unit is maladjusted, faced with an unstable social organization, the trend of which he cannot see, and could not control if he did see it.

But if so crazy a social structure embodied a community of real and potential criminals, it was also the habitation of extraordinary genius—Leonardo da Vinci, Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Ariosto and Tasso, Cesare Borgia are among the great company who, each in his own way, have left the indelible impress of their personality and works for good or evil upon the history of Italy.

It produced also in 1480 that prototype of the contemporary everyday point of view, Lucrezia Borgia.

If this is to destroy the romance, however unmentionable in some of its aspects, that has somehow grown up round this Duchess of Ferrara, it does not in itself solve the mystery

or lighten the difficulty of the problem of her life. But it is a possible method of approach which is of some interest as a criminal study. The interest is increased if it is to be allowed that the contemporary everyday point of view was not normal by any ordinary test.

It was not her father, Rodrigo Borgia, Alexander VI, who remarked, as did one of his successors in the Chair of Peter, that it would be well to *enjoy* the Papacy since God had bestowed it upon him, but Alexander would doubtless have concurred in that opinion. As a preliminary to an understanding of the point of view of that period it is important to remember that those in high places, ecclesiastical as much as secular, accepted their privileges and even practised their vices as of right. It was no hypocrisy in Rodrigo Borgia which made him the devout client of the Virgin Mary and at the same time the worldliest of cardinals, rather given to orgy, with a mistress and several children. He was not a monster of vice and dissimulation, unique among his contemporaries, as some historians would have us believe. He reflected the licence and inconsistency of his period. Rodrigo Borgia was a criminal among a ruling caste of criminals.

Lucrezia Borgia was educated at the convent of S. Sisto on the Appian Way. Not the least

remarkable aspect of her father's extraordinary character was his genuine love for his children and the real affection and respect in which he held his mistress, Vanozza. S. Sisto was chosen as one of the few Roman convents without the scandalous reputation which was attached to the greater number. She received, as was the custom, only religious instruction at the convent, but was educated with her brothers at the same time in secular subjects. There is nothing abnormal here. Lucrezia probably emerged from the convent armed with the conventional point of view of any well-bred girl of the period. She was properly educated according to the standards of the time, which were more specialized but higher, at any rate for women, than they are now. Lucrezia certainly spoke Spanish and French, and she understood Latin and Greek. Her correspondence shows her to be the master of straightforward but graceful Italian prose.

The early background is thus shaped. The girl emerges as one whose training during the most impressionable years of her life was essentially "correct." Her early traditions bore no relation to the atmosphere of the period. It might have been better for her if they had.

She appears to have learnt the truth about her parentage at an early age, but its implica-

tions probably meant little to her until about the time of her marriage. Lucrezia Borgia was soon to be plunged into that vortex against the currents of which she struggled only feebly, if indeed she struggled at all. And yet, thrust into the midst of much that was dreadful and revolting, her fate excites no pity. Neither apologists nor critics have pitied Lucrezia Borgia. She has remained an impassive and inscrutable figure, apparently untouched by the changes and chances of her mortal life.

In 1492 Lucrezia was living in the house of Madonna Adriana Orsini of scandalous memory, together with the fifteen-year-old Guilia Farnese, already an adulteress as the new mistress of Rodrigo Borgia. Such companionship was scarcely suitable for a girl of twelve. Guilia had succumbed to the Rodrigo, and Madonna Adriana, the girl's mother-in-law and Rodrigo's confidant, knew of the affair and winked at it. It was a monstrous example of self-interest. Rodrigo Borgia was elected Pope in the July of that year by means of simony so barefaced that Italy, and indeed Europe, hardened though men had become to such things, were scandalized at it.

The awakening had begun.

It leaves little outward mark upon Lucrezia as time goes on. The report concerning the

stallions is sufficiently a part of tradition to make it necessary to consider its authenticity seriously. It was asserted that the Pope was accustomed to watch the union of his stallions with mares from the Vatican windows, that the spectacle delighted him—as no doubt it would have done—and that Lucrezia was often in his company. Assuming its authenticity, too much has been made of this incident. Allowance must be made in assessing it for the different code of manners prevailing at that time, men and women being of less fastidious taste. On the other hand, it was hardly a spectacle for the Vicar of Christ and his daughter to take so much delight in.

The first marriage was a more serious matter. At the instance of the Pope she was betrothed to Giovanni Sforza, Vicar of Pesaro. Lucrezia could have had little say in the matter since she was but thirteen years of age; but it was a brilliant match for her and useful to the Pope just then. There is nothing surprising in so early a marriage. They were common enough at that time; but it remains for consideration hereafter how far such a practice may have reflected upon morals and manners.

The union continued for four years, and there is little to show what was the intrinsic success or failure of it. That so negative a conclusion must be drawn at once reveals one



aspect of Lucrezia's developing character. It is known that she was immensely popular in Pesaro, that without being beautiful the girl had quite exceptional charm and physical attraction. Guilia Farnese, now her lady-in-waiting (it is true the girl is two years her senior), talks, laughs, and schemes. Lucrezia is in the background, charming, silent, and inscrutable. Guilia is loved and perhaps sometimes hated. Lucrezia is liked and admired—nothing more.

She was not dull or stupid, the evidence is all the other way, but the early training kept her back, and Lucrezia doubtless had not the precocity, common enough then in married children, of Guilia and many another at the same age. The correctly bred girl finds herself in an environment anything but correct. She cannot adjust herself and there is confusion and fear in her heart. But there is also the Borgia eye to the main chance. She must capitulate even if she cannot make a more satisfactory compromise, and let events shape her if she cannot adjust herself and help to shape them. Already she has accepted the rôle of accessory after every fact.

A new figure was soon to be added to the background in the person of that infamous and most monstrous genius Lucrezia's brother, Cesare Borgia.

The marriage was not dissolved—it had ceased to be diplomatically useful—without some unpleasant passages. It suffices to record at this stage that a court composed of the creatures of the Pope declared that the marriage had never been consummated and that Lucrezia was therefore *virgo intacta*, a decision which was greeted with derision throughout Italy. Lucrezia Borgia swore that the marriage had never been consummated, and there seems to be no reasonable doubt that she committed perjury.

There is not, of course, positive proof that Giovanni Sforza was competent. He refused, rather naturally, to act upon Ludovico il Moro's ingenious but embarrassing suggestion that he should demonstrate his competency before accredited witnesses of whom the Papal Legate should be one, and he did declare, himself, that the marriage had been none in fact. But it is most probable that he also committed perjury on the advice of his friends, for his position might otherwise have been extremely dangerous.

The dissolution of the marriage was effected but it is less important than the related circumstances, the murder of the Duke of Gandia, Lucrezia's brother, and the rumours concerning her incest.

There has been a persistent tradition that Cesare Borgia murdered his brother and that

the motive was at least partly jealousy engendered by the incestuous love of both brothers for Lucrezia.

To consider the incest first, the direct evidence is the testimony of Giovanni Sforza himself who definitely makes the accusation. Lucrezia's apologists put it down to malice against, and hatred of the Borgia. The defence is thin. Sforza was not a strong character, but he was straightforward and honest. It was partly the cause of the quarrel. His letter to Ludovico concerning his interview with the Pope and his dubious position in regard to Alexander's agreement with the King of Naples gains in sincerity what it loses in finesse. It was a foolish letter, but an honest one.

It is very difficult to believe that Sforza would have made so serious a charge, and such a dangerous one, if he did not believe or know it to be true.

For the indirect evidence there is a formidable array of witnesses. Among them, Guicciardini and Peter Martyr, each in a different way, were strongly prejudiced, but the first was an eminent historian and would scarcely have perpetuated a rumour he did not consider authentic. Machiavelli, very cautious in such matters and a friend to the Borgia, accepts it.

The evidence on the other side is purely

negative. It is suggested that her admirers would not have eulogized Lucrezia to the extent they did had they believed her guilty or thought her capable of incest. This is absurd. Insufficient allowance is made for the contemporary point of view.

There is, in fact, the strongest possible presumptive evidence that incest was committed.

There are the movements of Lucrezia Borgia herself at the time, her retirement to the convent of S. Sisto. Some said she would turn nun, according to contemporary correspondence; others, things that none dared to commit to writing.

There is the unexplained and sudden action of Alexander himself, before the actual dissolution of the marriage, in ordering Giuffr  Borgia and his wife from Rome and apparently threatening to banish Lucrezia. This was after the murder of the Duke of Gandia and after reports concerning the incest had begun to circulate. The Pope was obviously angry, but he was not given to impulsive action dictated by mere bad temper. Lucrezia and other members of his family suspected too much regarding the murder, and the reports concerning the incest probably made him very nervous.

In regard to the murder of the Duke of Gandia, of which Lucrezia heard when in the

convent, it appears that both she and most of her family suspected, if indeed they were not certain, that Cesare Borgia was the author of the crime.

It is one of two occasions upon which there is no doubt that the strange tranquillity of Lucrezia Borgia was most dreadfully moved. Nor is the cause far to seek, for it rests upon equally definite evidence in the midst of so much that is problematical. There is no question at all but that there was genuine love between Lucrezia and Cesare Borgia, whether or not what European civilization has always regarded as an unnatural and criminal act was added to it.

It is evident in his letter to her during her illness in 1502, five years after these disturbing events. His visit when she was bled, he being present and assisting the surgeons, for she seems to have been afraid; his remaining with her—only he seemed to be able to make her laugh—until she was out of danger.

On her side was her anxiety at his confinement in Spain after his fall. For once she was stirred to action, moving heaven and earth to obtain his release; a release which could not at that time have materially benefited her at all, but rather the reverse.

Her inscrutability begins to become less mysterious now. She emerges as a maladjusted

unit in an organism whose machinery is too complicated for her, as it would have been for any unexceptional intelligent girl with youthful traditions of a straightforward ethical atmosphere. But she loved her brother; she was dazzled, confused, afraid of his infamous brilliance. Lucrezia Borgia cannot be blamed for that, for she was not alone. He was indeed the incarnation of all that was best and worst in a social order of which it is very difficult to assess the ultimate value.

Both her apologists and traducers were perhaps right. She was certainly all that the defence would have us believe. She was probably guilty on the charge preferred against her by her enemies. A legal tribunal would probably condemn her justly according to its lights, but on a last analysis such a case is only really answerable to a more than human court.

Her smiling compliance which made her an accessory after so many ugly facts may be traced to this love of her brother. It must have been difficult to question the works of that terrible will, and the more if the author were sincerely loved perhaps to the exclusion of all others.

Lucrezia emerged at any rate from the convent, and six months after the dissolution of her marriage she was again espoused, this

time to Don Alfonso of Salerno. The conflict was over and she capitulated. It may have been in her mind actually to turn nun at the dictates of her early traditions; but her love overcame her horror, she could not divert it into the channel of religion.

At this time occurred the affair of the fifty harlots, often known as the Feast of the Chestnuts. As to the authenticity of this incident, which took place in Cesare Borgia's apartments in the Vatican, there seems to be no doubt. The Latin text of Burchard's account will not bear translation and it suffices to indicate that the guests, male and female, were naked, that supper was followed by a promiscuous erotic orgy.

Tradition has it that Lucrezia Borgia was present as a spectator on this occasion, nor is it improbable that this was in fact the case. There is no question as to the pronounced eroticism of the Borgia as a family, and that any or all of them might have indulged themselves in this way. The practice also of marrying children at the age of twelve and thirteen produced a different view of such matters to that which obtains in our own day. Even allowing for the greater physical precocity of the Latin nations, girls were married at an age which brought them in touch with sexual experience too early. The effect of

premature experience upon women is now pretty well understood, and a girl of that period, without necessarily being morally reprobate, might have witnessed so scandalous a spectacle with fewer qualms and possibly less harm to herself than one of this twentieth century. Orgies of this kind were enjoyed by others besides the Borgia. The gravity of the scandal lay in the place where it was enacted, the Vatican.

Whatever doubt may remain regarding the murderer of the Duke of Gandia, there is none in the matter of the death of Lucrezia's second husband. Don Alfonso was set upon by assassins and severely wounded. He recovered, however, but a deliberate attempt was made by Cesare personally upon his life. He was apparently repelled by Lucrezia herself and one of her women. It was useless. Cesare summoned one of his captains, who strangled the young duke.

This abominable crime was the result of personal animosity. For some reason unknown Cesare hated Don Alfonso. It is significant to observe the sudden fear, almost horror, which Don Alfonso's movements suggest. He suddenly left Lucrezia and fled, and was with great difficulty induced to return to her. Nothing is more probable than that this flight corresponded with a quarrel between him and Cesare.



It has been suggested that he was lured back for the deliberate purpose of murder, but there is nothing to bear this out. More probable is the explanation that the entreaties of Lucrezia herself—she seems to have been distressed and perhaps angry at his flight—caused her father to bring pressure upon him to return.

It is interesting to note at this point the conflicting elements in Lucrezia's character. She was by no means merely yielding and compliant. Her influence over her father is evident and she managed as a rule to get her own way. Evidently it was with Cesare that she could do nothing. His inflexible will controlled both the Pope and her, and her love for him must frequently have struggled with hatred. If she had affection for any of her husbands it was for Don Alfonso. It might have been better for him had she had none. She was probably at least a contributory cause of his murder.

But even this tragedy seems not to have affected Lucrezia greatly. It is true that she left Rome for the castle of Nepi at her father's request if not by his command. She wept a little and signs her letters the Unhappy One. But her distress was due in part to the anger of the Pope who, to give him the benefit of the doubt, seems to have been genuinely disturbed by the murder. His irritation also had been increased by some quarrel with his daughter

the cause of which is not known. It is at least certain that in less than six months she had returned to Rome, and the tone of her letters changes as soon as she had received her father's permission to return. Perhaps significantly, she was not recalled until Cesare had left Rome.

A year later Lucrezia was again married, this time to Alfonso Ercole, Duke of Ferrara. The marriage had been arranged by the Duke's father and the Pope. Alfonso himself was actually hostile to the idea. He neither visited nor corresponded with Lucrezia while the protracted negotiations were going on. But he did visit her at last for two hours only. In that time Lucrezia fascinated him, further evidence, if any were required, of her charm and power to attract.

The unscrupulous but incomparable diplomacy of the Borgia—there was none to equal it in Italy—had triumphed. Cesare, who controlled it in all essentials, was in sight of the fulfilment of his ambition, the overlordship of a united Italy, nominally under the Vatican. Not for nothing was his motto *Aut Caesar, aut nihil*. It meant the assurance of his power in Romagna, the support of Mantua, Urbino, and Ferrara. France was now confirmed in friendship. Bologna and Florence were less dangerous.

His sister's love for him had completed what looked like the unshakable edifice of his power. It is incorrect to regard Lucrezia Borgia as a mere helpless tool. She swam with the tide, and perhaps made no independent effort to direct it, but still she swam. At least three times a way of escape was open of which she did not take advantage; there was wanting the desire to escape. After the death of her father and the fall of Cesare she returned to that habit of life and mind agreeable to her first traditions. Her anxiety for the fate of Cesare and her anguish at his death—they feared to tell her of it at first—alone disturbed the last phases of her third venture in marriage. Lucrezia Borgia died in 1519, whatever her crimes may have been, deservedly honoured.

Lucrezia Borgia's criminality as a passive agent cannot be denied. Its interest for us lies in the fact that it was the instrument of genius. The descendants of the Borgia, if any remain, might well implore that the memory of their ancestors should be saved from those who have taken up cudgels in their defence. The methods of the apologists have been for the most part very inexpert examples of special pleading. Their opponents, on the other hand, burning with moral indignation, have made

them romantically monstrous. Both have oddly perpetuated the excesses of contemporary opinion whose perspective is necessarily false.

The evil but necessary genius of the Borgia and their contemporaries was a passion for the destruction of all the values of medieval Europe which the Renaissance had doomed in any case; it was merely a question as to whether these values would die a natural death or by violence. They died by violence. The very crimes of that criminal society of Italy indicate how great was the hold that classical values, good and bad, had gained. They existed in that confused period side by side with the Christian system they were striving to supplant. It remained for the century following to begin a new synthesis.

Cesare Borgia emerges as one of the incarnations of that titanic struggle, half hero, half monster. For him the unity of Italy meant the reign of Caesar, but he did see beyond the phase of destruction and organized banditry for which he was responsible. If his vices are remembered, his personal courage, administrative ability, and justice in larger questions—Romagna was witness to that—must be placed on the other side of the scales.

Against this large background is placed the small, soft, and yet not altogether uncourageous figure of the sister who loved him. That was

perhaps her greatest crime, but she was essentially a criminal of circumstance, a normal conventional being, not of the stuff to profit when times are out of joint, who had thrust upon her part of the tremendous and criminal work of destruction of a social order of which Europe had grown weary. Lucrezia Borgia reflects rather pallidly the lurid light of the spirit of genius of that day to which she obediently ministered.

## PORTRAIT OF A MONSTER

IT is the year 1900 and the scene a village, Pokrovskoe, in the province of Tobolsk in Siberia. It is like a thousand others with the poor huts which form the greater part of it together with a few more pretentious dwellings of the moushicks who are a little better-to-do. There is a small domed church with its parish priest, a worthy orthodox man.

But not far away is the monastery of Abalasky, an obscure and grim ecclesiastical house where numbers of sectarian heretics are confined. It is in theory a monastery, in fact a prison, for in Holy Russia heretics are still counted criminals. Who is to guess in this first year of a new century that in that monastery the seeds of the tremendous catastrophe of the Revolution of 1917 are germinating?

There are uncomfortable rumours abroad in the village. Sectarianism was rampant, teaching, as some schismatics had, that fornication was not a mortal sin. Things were even worse. There were the Khlysty ships, the barques of salvation which admitted it as a rite.

A report had been examined and verified

concerning the house of a certain well-to-do moushick who had attached to his house a shed without windows. It contained a bath, and the moushick, an avowed sectarian, took young girls there who bathed with him naked and allowed him to embrace them. He was one of the helmsmen of a Khlysty ship. The baptism of the bath and submission of the body to the helmsman, these were a necessary part of the rites of salvation. The ignorant—and not as it afterwards fell out the ignorant only—were not averse from accepting a dogma which made such things allowable and even prescribed them.

Rumour, more or less authenticated, passed through the ear of the priest to that of the bishop. The representatives of the Church, realizing the social dangers of a promiscuity for which some sort of mystical justification was cunningly being sought, turned their attention particularly to the man who had set up this scandalous bathroom, and who found welcome from time to time in the Abalasky monastery. It will perhaps never be known to what lengths erotic madness may have proceeded within its walls. How many men or women burning with a love other than the love of God may not have been confined there to work out a problematical salvation with fear and trembling.

This man was named Gregory Rasputin. A

scandalized bishop was busy collecting evidence which would ensure his prosecution for sectarianism. The machinery of the law moved slowly in Holy Russia. The case passed from department to department. Peasant Gregory, now calling himself a Starets, a holy man and expounder of the Scriptures, suddenly disappeared.

There is a train lumbering along through the scorched plains of Siberia on the way to Petersburg. A third-class compartment contains this same Gregory Rasputin. He does not talk much among the noisy crowd of peasants. The man is about twenty-nine, well built, and strong. He is not ill-looking, but he has curious pale blue-grey eyes which gaze intently; an animal force seems to radiate from them. Gregory drinks a great deal of vodka and he looks at the girls who get in and out at the wayside stations. Whenever possible he will make room for them at his side, sit as close to them as he can, and look them over with that intent pale gaze. Even they, accustomed enough to such mute appeals, flush and feel uncomfortable. There is no appeal here but a command almost to surrender then and there.

Who shall say what desire first impelled Gregory Rasputin towards the capital? He is shrewd enough with the constricted astuteness of the unlettered peasant. His is nevertheless



a very dark mind, but illumined, perhaps, with a faint dawning consciousness of power. Gregory, Starets and holy man, teacher of women. There are women in Petersburg beautiful, white skinned, and richly clad. There are baths in Petersburg luxuriously appointed. He is a Starets, a holy man. . . .

In some dark and confused manner Gregory had a belief that he was on a mission. It is not the first time in history that violent eroticism and mysticism have met, struggled in the same personality, and come to some sort of terms.

In Petersburg luck comes his way. He falls in with a priest, Yaroslav Medvied, a sectarian whom he has met at the Abalasky monastery. This man is now confessor to one of the Grand Duchesses. Gregory is presented to the simple and devout Bishop Feofan, confessor to the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna herself. He is a simple peasant, thinks the good man, but a Starets. His mind and soul are serene ; he will quiet the doubts and conflicts in the mind of the Empress.

The astute Gregory takes his cue. He learns that the Empress is to go incognito to the cathedral with one of her ladies-in-waiting to pray for the little Tsarevitch who is ill. The Starets is there first and sees the two veiled ladies enter and kneel before the ikons on the bema.

He begins to pray aloud in that curious hoarse voice which had so much conviction in it for the Tsar and the Empress and for the Tsarevitch, begging that they may be delivered from their enemies, for the health and prosperity of the Tsar of all the Russias. Nor perhaps was his fervour altogether simulated. He was in all things to be the loyal servant of the Tsar.

All this passes through Gregory's mind as he prays, making the triple adoration, beating his breast.

Alexandra Feodorovna is startled at this miracle and later inquires as to the man who has prayed for her and her family openly in the cathedral, thus proclaiming himself a man of God and one who knew secret things.

She questions Bishop Feofan, who tells her that Gregory is a Starets and Natchetchik, a great expounder of the Scriptures. In this the Bishop could hardly have been deceived; he had presumably some knowledge of the Scriptures himself since he was Principal of the Theological Academy of Petersburg.

She summons Gregory Rasputin to the Tsarskoe and he is at once given employment at the palace. The Starets quickly becomes a trusted man and is soon promoted to the position of lamp-keeper to the Tsar. It is his duty to tend the lights which burn before the holy ikons.

Rasputin steadily gains an ascendancy over

Alexandra Feodorovna. A peasant becomes the closest confidant of one of the proudest women in Europe, Empress of all the Russias.

That this was literally true, there is no doubt. Nor is it impossible to explain. Alexandra, though in many ways strong willed and imperious, was superstitious to a marked degree. This in itself would scarcely be sufficient to account for Rasputin's conquest. She recognized the power in the man, the manifestation of an overflowing sensuality and animalism, and mistook it, as it has often been mistaken before, for divine inspiration. He was a new type, the only man in or around the Court who seemed to have any vitality. What really animated him was little more than the satisfaction of ever-present and unsatiated lust. His sensual enthusiasm had almost the quality of the spiritual emotion with which it was incongruously tempered. Indeed, it deluded even Gregory Rasputin. He actually believed in his erotic animal religion. It is not an uncommon phenomenon, but in this man it was pushed to such monstrous lengths as to be an evil genius.

But it is manifestations of this kind that deceive such neurotic exhausted women. Subconsciously they recognize some natural and divine attribute in the animalism and physical vigour denied altogether to them; in their consciousness it emerges deified, so that to

Alexandra Feodorovna Gregory to the end was a man of God. He was astute enough never to disillusion her.

At first he behaves with decorum, and if he indulges in orgy it is discreetly and in secret. The dark days of the Japanese War and Revolution of 1905 come and go. He is more firmly established than ever. He spoke words of divine wisdom during war and revolution. He can cure the little Tsarevitch when he is ill. No one knows that he has an accomplice in the nurse who doses the child with noxious drugs and leaves the antidote to Gregory Rasputin. He is the holiest of holy Starets.

The rumours begin again. There is a highly placed lady who comes to him seeking promotion for her husband. It is rumoured that *he* was the final word in such matters. Rasputin runs her over with his pale eyes. She must come to-morrow, and must wear a low-cut dress. He bids her not to dare to return otherwise. The woman is furious, but next day she is seen wearing just such a dress on her way to Rasputin's apartments. She interviews him privately. A few days later her husband is promoted.

Gregory begins again to preach, very discreetly, his doctrines of the Khlysty ship and his mission of helmsman. Now his disciples are young girls about the Court. There are several

who it is said have been seen going to the baths with him. With more than one highly placed name it is suggested that its owner knows more about Gregory Rasputin than an unmarried woman is supposed to know about any man.

He is beginning to attain the power he has longed for. He came to Petersburg, after all, in search of pretty, well-bred ladies. It was not only on account of the lust of the flesh but of hate and cruelty. He is a Starets, a holy man. They had tried to persecute him in Siberia, and now in Petersburg the Metropolitan Anthony had laid information against him. That bully, Hermogen, had called him a liar and a scoundrel, and had struck him. There was that swine, Stolypin, who forced him to leave Petersburg. Now he finds his sweet revenge in doing violence to the bodies of society's wives and daughters.

Rasputin's influence was built up upon his ascendancy over the Empress, and the influence he wielded over numerous women at Court. It is not a great exaggeration to suggest that the Court of the last of the Romanoffs was little better than an aristocratic brothel. Rodzianko, President of the Imperial Duma, a man of distinguished family and liberal views, was responsible for the collection of much of the evidence against Rasputin. He expresses amazement upon the discovery of photographs

of Rasputin surrounded by women disciples many of whom were well known to him This monster, subhuman in his ferocious animalism, gave back to the decaying society of that time some of the crude salt of life that its over-civilized weariness craved. Cunningly, he provided just that excuse with his ship of salvation which its erotic mysticism required.

Gregory Rasputin was not an isolated phenomenon. His path had been made straight by several forerunners. Mystical charlatans were almost as much in evidence at the court of Nicholas as they had been at that of Louis XVI. Rasputin was the supreme Cagliostro without Cagliostro's constructive imagination or, for all his charlatanism, his scruples.

His aim is to strike first at the orthodox churchman whom he hates. Hermogen is removed, and the Metropolitan Anthony disgraced. But not churchmen only. Stolypin, the Premier, is brutally murdered in a theatre at Petersburg. Kokovtzeff, a supporter of Rasputin, is elected in his place. More rumours. Those who recall Stolypin's openly expressed opinions and treatment of Rasputin exchange glances, but think it best to say nothing where nothing can be proved.

He wishes to be ordained priest, and these men have resisted his ordination. Gregory perhaps aims at high office in the Church.

Metropolitan Gregory of a thousand concubines, supreme helmsman of the ship of fornication and everlasting life ! Archimandrite Barnabas, illiterate and feeble, is proposed as Metropolitan in place of Anthony, and elected.

But Rodzianko, sincere if long winded, and President of the Imperial Duma, goes on presenting his reports. He is loyal if a trifle pompous, the Emperor is convinced of it. There are letters, photographs, texts and inscriptions of the Khlysyts anything but orthodox. Another storm breaks and the holy man is banished. He departs in a cloud of prayer and forgiveness of his enemies.

The imperial train carrying the Tsar and his Consort to the Crimea lumbers on its way towards Moscow. Suddenly there is a commotion and the train is stopped. The secret police have discovered a stowaway upon the train concealed in a compartment reserved for Prince Tumanoff. Rasputin is escorted from the train at Tosno and forced to return to Tobolsk.

He has the persistence and blind courage of an animal. It is not long before there are rumours of his return to Petersburg. The Romanoff dynasty has ruled Russia for three hundred years. The celebrations are to be conducted by the Patriarch of Antioch. All is ready to begin when it is reported that a man in peasant's dress and wearing a gold pectoral

cross is standing near the place reserved for the Royal family. Rodzianko is summoned. He discovers Rasputin dressed in a tunic of crimson silk of the peasant style with black breeches and black top boots.

Questioned, he replies to the President of the Duma in the second person singular, and produces his invitation card. Ordered from the cathedral, he falls on his knees praying that God will forgive this man his sins.

But steadily the party of the Empress gains ground—the Rasputin party. Soon he is back at the palace more firmly entrenched than ever. He is said to have a finger in the foreign policy. Abroad revolutionary organizations with no love for the Romanoffs have been considering for some time how far Rasputin is likely to be useful to them. He has apartments in the palace and a staff of secretaries. The holy man received huge sums as bribes, yet curiously he does not live in great luxury, and parts with a large proportion of his gains, but to whom, no one knows. What exactly is the object of the game which in any case can end only one way?

August, 1914. Mobilization, and then a rumour of a countermand. It was certainly one instantly denied, but who started it and why, and was there any truth in it? Everyone with any responsibility feels rather uncomfortable.

Ministers and generals come and go. There is



no continuity or stability of policy. Rumours of treachery are abroad and whispers regarding the Empress. But Rasputin remains. Patriots of the Duma and the Imperial Council see in the rapid changes, the appointment of incompetent officials, the influence of the Starets. He is responsible for the elevation of Stumer the German to the Premiership. The Ministers now interview the Empress and report to her, and everyone knows whence she draws *her* inspiration. Protopopoff becomes Minister of the Interior. How far is he dupe and how far a traitor? The man is not easy in his mind. He attends the Duma in the uniform of an officer of the Gendarmerie, and delivers an excited and incoherent oration. The man is ill. He talks to Rodzianko until two o'clock in the morning about being the saviour of Russia.

At the front incompetence and confusion. There are no proper hospitals, no bandages, no hospital trains. The wounded lie in agony in the cold and wet with wounds rapidly becoming septic, undressed for days. They are thrown into cattle trucks and sent back God knows where since there is no room for them at the hospital bases. There is no co-ordination of the higher command. Divisions act independently; the valiant flower of Russia's men is cut and blown to pieces.

At home gathering chaos. Transport is dis-

organized and the people starve in the midst of plenty. Thousands of tons of meat lie about in Siberia to rot, facilities to move it being lacking. But Rasputin goes on with his vodka, his baths, and his women. There is neither leather nor boots for the peasants. It is whispered that the disorganization is the deliberate work of treachery. Patriots beg and command by turns that the Empress shall be restrained and her advisors dismissed. There is a new element, patriotic according to its lights. Kerensky's voice, echoing the discontent of the people, is raised more insistently in the Duma.

All the time not far from the frontier, an exiled Russian watches events, and even prophesies the day when he will enter Petersburg, the town afterwards to be called by his name.

And then the culminating event brought about by an exasperated if outmoded patriotism.

Gregory Rasputin is invited to visit the apartments of a highly placed Russian noble. There is a beautiful woman who wishes to meet him there. She is named. He accepts with at least no more suspicion than usual. The lady is not present when he arrives but his host explains that she is on her way. There is wine on the table, and Gregory is invited to drink. He takes a glass and gulps down the contents supposed to contain enough potassium cyanide to kill half Petersburg.

By some unexplained mistake the supposed poison fails in its effect. Desperate, the host makes ready with a pistol. There is a shot, and Gregory Rasputin falls.

In the resulting haste of preparation to dispose of the body, the body itself is momentarily forgotten. It is discovered later not where it lay, but crawling down the stairs like some wounded reptile. How many lives has this Starets? In the yard there are further shots and it is not known how many more were required to dispose of Gregory Rasputin.

At first the holy man is reported missing. The guards outside the house where he was shot heard and suspected nothing, or so they report. A search is made and the body presently recovered from under the ice in the river.

It is too late, and the work of the self-appointed executioners only increases the confusion. Desperate and furious, the Empress causes wholesale arrests to be made. This is a last extremity, for the Starets has prophesied that his death will be followed by the downfall of the Romanoffs. As an act of expiation all suspects are severely punished, and the last of Rasputin's critics deprived of office.

It is 1917. What have been the intermittent murmurings become more insistent, and swell into cries, then into an ominous roar. Down with the German Empress, down with the

traitors and betrayers of Holy Russia ! The voice of Kerensky, high, faltering, even a little hysterical, rising and falling, persists. The Provisional Government ; the thud of its collapse—it was scarcely great enough to crash—revolution, evolution who can yet say whither ?

The mystery of Gregory Rasputin will perhaps never be solved. So unsatisfactory a conclusion is almost inevitable in the very circumstances of the case. Little is certainly known of Gregory the man. It is by the tremendous results direct or indirect of his influence that he has been judged. How far that influence actually contributed to the breakdown of 1917, it is very difficult to say ; but it is probable that the machinery would have broken down in any case. There were enough subversive influences at work and to spare.

Caution is necessary in the absence of sufficient relevant fact, but even upon such evidence as there is Gregory Rasputin emerges as something more than an unclean and illiterate peasant. In allowing that he may have been both, it is well to bear in mind that this is the evidence of his enemies. Gregory Rasputin was a very dangerous man, but his enemies failed to realize exactly where the danger lay. With a little more perspicacity they might have

been rid of him, which would have been a good thing for them and for Russia.

Between the extreme frontiers of genius and crime there is a neutral ground where some very strange flowers have grown. Lazzareti was one, Cagliostro another, Rasputin on more monstrous and revolting a scale, a third.

On the evidence it is quite legitimate to draw the conclusion that Rasputin was indeed a religious fanatic. That his religion prescribed practices quite inconsistent with orthodox morality makes no difference. Other religious fanatics have done the same. The accounts of his behaviour which are indubitably authentic make the conclusion inevitable; his knowledge of the Scriptures; the wearing of the gold pectoral cross of a priest which made him very unpopular; his determined effort to become a priest, a step which could have brought him no material advantage. At one period of his curiously muddled and formless career he doubtless dreamed of high office in the Church, which would have secured him less of the mammon of unrighteousness than his unofficial but unique position at Court could ensure.

But that was a strange and significant fact about Gregory Rasputin; he was not wholeheartedly for the mammon of unrighteousness.

He received in bribes and gifts huge sums of money. To what use a large proportion of his

riches was put has never been satisfactorily explained. Rasputin drank, and his animal propensities generally were abnormally and even monstrously developed, but there is no evidence that he lived extravagantly. If he had ambitions, wealth and security were not the final objective.

The solution of the problem does not lie there. His ambitions were more dangerous and obscure because less well defined. He was consumed with an intense and animal hatred. Had his fanaticism taken a more orthodox form that hatred might have been turned upon himself, so that Gregory Rasputin would have lived and died in some Siberian monastery in the odour of sanctity, the subject of self-inflicted and unexampled austerities.

As it was, his hatred found means of satisfaction by way of the mystical-erotic outlet. It is quite impossible to ignore Rasputin's religion. There was no insincerity about it; it was a perfectly genuine, however unedifying a manifestation.

His hatred was frankly that of a fanatic for those who disagreed with him. The persecution, as he would doubtless have called it, began in Pokrovkoe. The parish priest and the bishop who had begun proceedings against him for heresy sowed the seeds of that monstrous animosity which was to bring the Romanoff

dynasty to ruin. His subsequent behaviour in Petersburg is not consistent with the theory that he was nothing more than an illiterate sensualist. He persisted in preaching the doctrine of the Khlysty ships<sup>1</sup> discreetly but more or less openly; his expulsions from the capital were both directly traceable to this cause. No mere sensualist would have been guilty of such folly. Had satisfaction of his carnal appetite been his only aim, an assumed orthodoxy and reasonable discretion would have served Rasputin better.

Among a large section of the responsible and conservative statesmen opposition to Rasputin and to his doctrines grew apace, and with it the fanatic's hatred. It is well to recollect that his animosity was in especial directed against the orthodox and particularly the ecclesiastics.

He had all the criminal's hatred, cunning, and a complete lack of constructive imagination; but the hatred came to be so monstrously developed as almost to place him in a class by himself. So fanatic an obsession otherwise directed might by its irresistible force alone have rebuilt rather than destroyed a dynasty.

With such intense phases of hatred there is always an intense will to power infinitely

<sup>1</sup> This has been questioned by Princess Catherine Radziwill, but Rodzianko's assertion is positive and must have been supported by sound evidence upon which he evidently sincerely thought he could rely.

dangerous as being lacking in sense of direction. If there is one thing evident regarding the so-called policy dictated by Rasputin it is that it was no policy. It was darkness, confusion, and chaos. That was Gregory's way of assuaging his hatred. His policy was but a reflection of his dark and chaotic mind. To the last the Empress believed him inspired, and so indeed he was. Hatred may be an inspiration.

It has been suggested that he was the agent of Germany, of the later revolutionaries, of secret organizations with sinister motives located no one knows where. He may have been the tool of one or all of them, but he was the agent only of the hatred of Gregory Rasputin. That he strove to introduce and believed at first that he would make his particularly carnal form of sectarianism dominant is more than probable. A vast but confused conception of a Kingdom of God where flesh and spirit are no longer in conflict is the refuge of such minds, a Kingdom of Christ and Priapus with Gregory Rasputin as its prophet and vicar. He was opposed, persecuted, and frustrated. He failed to overcome the rather natural prejudice to his new religion, and in his animal fury he turned upon Russia to destroy it.

But that he should have gained the disciples and supporters he did is a tribute to his extraordinary personality. He did understand how



to appeal to those who in accepting Christ had not quite forgotten Priapus. Of poor mentality and—according to available evidence, possibly prejudiced—practically illiterate, in some dark fashion he knew how to play up and turn to his advantage this age-old struggle of men and women. He had the instinct for power and knew its secret.

In the mystery of Gregory Rasputin it is not even certain that the supposed poorness of his intellect can be accepted without reservation. His was at least an abnormal cunning which could maintain supremacy in the midst of so many intelligent and subtle influences directed against him. Hatred was the secret of his cunning, as it was the key to his whole character and personality. It was the blind force of the beast which knows how to destroy, but not how to reconstruct.

# RETROSPECT



## A SUMMARY

TO what extent the examples quoted are typical it now obviously becomes a matter of interest to determine. On the face of it it might be argued that, throughout, the special case has been pleaded by the choice of examples in which genius and criminality co-exist; that the reader has been manoeuvred by dubious means into a position he never intended to occupy. This, if substantiated, would be a very damaging charge.

It is this very charge, of course, that has always been brought against any theory in support of the criminal type. Fundamentally, the critics of the Lombroso school took up the position that such a thing as a criminal type did not exist. It was not a question as to whether Lombroso's interpretation of it was the right one. Recent observations have made it quite clear that, as he stated them, his anthropological theories are in many vital particulars untenable. But his critics did not, by disposing of his theory, dispose of the theory of the criminal type itself. Criminal psychology remains to be accounted for.

But the same line of attack has been maintained. The English School still in the main holds the view that the criminal is an ordinary human being who through environment, misfortune, vicious associations, or through all these causes operating simultaneously has somehow "gone wrong." If this contention be valid, it is clear that a criminal type cannot exist. However much the phenomena of criminality were grouped and classified, on that theory, criminality must remain an individual manifestation.

In this connexion, reference must again be made to the quoted examples, beginning with the criminal cases. On this evidence it seems difficult to escape a conclusion favourable to some theory of inherent criminality. The affairs of Marie Schneider, Wainewright, and Peter Kuerten are illustrations in point. If these were isolated phenomena they might be dismissed as an unsatisfactory basis for general inference. They are not, however, even remarkably exceptional. Three examples of the poisoner who operates without apparent motive have been quoted in this book. They represent examples among hundreds of which the mass poisonings which took place in Austria in 1929 are a contemporary illustration. The ripper type of murderer is comparatively rare, but it persists, though sometimes not proceeding

beyond the point of malicious wounding, as in the case of Renwick Williams, commonly known as "The Monster." In 1790 he was convicted of assaulting Miss Anne Porter, upon whose thigh he inflicted a wound ten inches long with some sharp instrument. This was one of a series of similar outrages of which he was the author.

Marie Schneider is more exceptional, but she by no means stands alone. Italian and French alienists have recorded many other similar cases.

Nor is it necessary to rely only upon the crime of murder to defend this thesis. William Parsons was a man of good family, his father being a baronet in very comfortable circumstances. Neither environment, misfortune, nor vicious associations can explain his criminality. His career began with petty theft at Eton, for which he was ultimately expelled. He indulged in card-sharping and theft from his relations. He was a forger. Later he conspired with another in the matter of the abduction of his own sister in consideration of which—she was an heiress—he was to receive a large commission. Parsons was finally convicted of highway robbery, and in spite of petitions for his reprieve he was executed in 1750 as an incorrigible criminal. In general, highway robbery was often a manifestation of instinctive criminality.

Men who could have earned a living honestly, and who even in a few cases did not require to earn it at all, had they lived quietly, deliberately chose to augment their incomes in this manner.

On the evidence it certainly seems fair if indeed it is not inevitable to assume that we are dealing with antisocial types and not with individual manifestations. It is, of course, important to bear in mind that all criminality does not fall within this category. The man who steals bread because he is hungry is not necessarily antisocial. They who commit murder under stress of moral indignation are not always of the criminal type, however indefensible their act from a legal and social point of view. Charlotte Corday was rightly executed according to law but she was not on that account necessarily a criminal in the theoretical sense.

And it is from the theoretical point of view that the present discussion has so much importance for us. The real significance of the affairs, for example, of Schonleben and Jeaneret, resides not in the crimes they committed but in the habit of mind that induced them to act as they did. Such are potential criminals in any case. They are antisocial types whose criminality is really independent of the actual crime committed. This consideration is not without practical importance. If by any test

it were found possible to recognize the potential criminal, society would be justified in protecting itself against him, provided the measures adopted were appropriate and merciful.

In practice this is accepted and acted upon, although in very barbarous fashion. A man may be charged with being an habitual criminal and dealt with accordingly. But it is one thing for society to protect itself against the criminal and quite another to punish him on account of his nature as distinct from his acts. The importance of this, in any case, from the point of view of our thesis, is the implied acceptance of the view, for practical purposes, that a criminal type exists.

In view of the evidence of such numerous examples, and of these considerations, it seems very difficult to escape entirely from the theory of the criminal type. A further step, however, has been taken in endeavouring to show the underlying cause of all criminality. Again, the examples seem definitely to reveal the criminal as a maladjusted unit deficient in those instincts which make it possible for the normal man to maintain a balance between the reality and pleasure principles. His attitude is grounded in hatred of a social order from which his nature separates him and with which he cannot bring himself into harmony. There is conscious hatred in such examples as that of Peter



Kuerten, in others it may be subconscious, but it is not less real on that account.

It is further to be concluded that criminality does not necessarily presuppose stupidity. This is quite evident from the examination of the example of François Villon, who it is quite justifiable to classify as a criminal in the most formal sense. Practically and theoretically every essential is there. In particular is to be remarked Villon's hatred of society of which he himself must have been quite conscious even if he were ignorant of its cause. Villon's case is again typical. It is exceptional only in the fact that he happened to be the greatest poet of his century. Apart from analogous instances among his contemporaries and an interesting modern example to be considered later, he shows points of contact with Wainewright, Troppmann, and Lacenaire. Wainewright was a literary man and Lacenaire wrote verses and memoirs. Troppmann was educated and of exceptional intelligence.

It is at this point and from this direction that the major problem of genius is approached. We observe in Villon, Wainewright, and Lacenaire enemies of society, maladjusted units, who yet employ their talents in an effort at compensation, Villon with his poetry, Wainewright with his essays, Lacenaire with his verse and memoirs. Of these only the work of Villon

has any artistic significance. This, however, is not the point. The direction and manifestation of the attempted compensation is the same in all cases. With Villon it is a protest which has resounded down the ages. Lacenaire and Wainewright are vainglorious, men who in their different ways thought themselves set apart from the herd; both expressly or by implication re-echo the protest or criticize the workaday standards and point of view which they hate.

François Vidocq presents certain characteristics which might be called unique, but here again there is to be found the conflict of the maladjusted unit with society. But a resolution of the conflict is effected by the curious device of the criminal turning policeman. This is not so contradictory as it might first appear when the circumstances of the case are taken into consideration. To be a chief of the police at that period was to be not only the guardian of society but a master of it, hated and feared. Such evidence as there is does not suggest that the sudden change in Vidocq's circumstances caused much in his point of view. He loved society no better as a policeman than as a criminal. But he did strive for and attain to power over it. This is to approach the larger problem a little more closely. There may be observed in Vidocq's life and work something

which at least approaches genius in action. He is definitely an intermediate product. Retaining essentially the criminal habit of mind he yet solved his problem by other means than picking society's pockets by the old methods.

This brings us to a consideration of the genius and the genius type in the light of the quoted examples. The same difficulties, but in more formidable a shape, have to be faced when examining this problem. The theory that an individual may be of the criminal type without being formally a criminal has a background, however uncertain, in tradition; that of a genius type has practically no background at all.

It has been indicated, however, that there is a case for the consideration of genius as a psychological type which touches at some points the psychology of criminality. There is the same imperfect adjustment to environment and there is augmented conflict since genius strives either in action to overthrow the existing order and introduce another in harmony with it, or, in thought and imagination, to construct a new world. In either case there is a clash between the aims of genius and the existing reality principle for which society stands. The measure of the individual's genius will be the measure of his success in the construction of a new environment which he can freely occupy.

The psychology of genius is the resultant of that conflict which the normal man has resolved by capitulation to the reality principle of society. An endeavour has been made to show that that psychological state may exist whether the genius succeeds or fails. If that is so, there is a case for the genius type as distinct from its successful manifestation. It will be evident that where there is failure the criminal psychology, as such, is likely to appear. Society will in any case endeavour to revenge itself upon the antisocial element, while frustrated genius may itself react to opposition by contesting the issue with criminal weapons.

There is to be observed in the case of Lazzareti an approach to an elementary form of the genius type. There are all the indications of severe conflict; attempted resolution of it in various directions; and failure culminating in more or less revolutionary activity in the guise of religion. The revolt is evident, and the denunciation of society, defended on moral grounds, quite clearly expressed.

Other examples chosen certainly appear to be consistent with this hypothesis. The curious affair of Verlaine and Rimbaud throws a good deal of light upon the operations of genius psychology and the results of frustration. It will be immediately evident that Verlaine, although not a genius, was undoubtedly of the

genius type. The evidences of conflict are no less obvious than the failure to resolve it. The crime, which was nothing else than a weak gesture of defiance, seems to follow upon that failure as an inevitable consequence of it. It is quite true that Verlaine failed as a criminal as he failed as a genius. But his course of action from beginning to end was just such as another more richly endowed might have followed, but followed to the resolution of the problem, or the commission of a more successful crime.

Gifted with greater courage, Oscar Wilde reveals a similar trend and habit of mind. But there is here the struggle not only between the individual and society but the attempt to attack the enemy with the weapons of both thought and action. The *Æsthetic Movement* failed in any immediate effect. Oscar Wilde's daring attempt to live according to its canon resulted in a crime for which an outraged society awarded him two years' hard labour. Oscar Wilde is perhaps the best example of the consequences of frustrated genius. His art proved to be insufficient weapon with which to wage war. The man of action determined to carry on the contest, girds himself for battle; the result is a criminal act.

In the case of Edgar Allan Poe a state of things in many respects comparable is to be

observed. He is a man afflicted with his genius as with a torture, and he discovered in his art no real means of resolving his conflict. Poe frequently changes his ground, first trying this expedient and then that. There is the evidence to be read in his tales, his poems, his essays and criticism. Finally, there is the last assault with *Eureka* to which he himself attached so high an importance. It bears eloquent testimony to its author's desperate plight. But it failed, and with its failure reason itself was deposed.

But his art, as with Oscar Wilde, was not the sole expedient. At every turn we are faced with his violently antisocial point of view, his threatening and libellous letters, and his attempt of blackmail. Frustrated genius in action.

These examples do emphatically illustrate the genius type. And the better since all in a sense fall short on the standard by which genius must be measured. But this is of no importance beside the consideration that they can be measured by no other. It is impossible to apply the criterion by which normal talent, however brilliant, can be judged. It is in genius thwarted or unsuccessful that the criminal reaction is likely to be observed. Whether the lack of success is due to external forces or to some defect in the man of the genius type

himself makes no difference. He has to resolve his conflict with society and if his art or other instrument will not suffice, criminality is the only one that remains. An analysis of the quoted examples makes it difficult to escape the conclusion that criminality supplemented the defect in the instrument of genius. That is why the crimes appear to be without material motive. Those of Verlaine, Poe, and Wilde are quite meaningless on any theory of gain in the ordinary sense. Nor are these isolated examples. Chatterton's forgeries with which he endeavoured to deceive and for a time did deceive Horace Walpole were apparently quite motiveless. His bitter satire and invective and his senseless profanity are also irreconcilable with his poetic genius. Even the more straightforward affairs of Sir Francis Bacon's treachery to his former friend, Essex, and his criminal malpractice in administration, though not exactly motiveless, are very difficult to square with his extraordinary talents. It is true that he was obliged to investigate the charges against Essex, but he need not have condemned him with such malice. His mad extravagance and the illegitimate means he adopted to find a way out of his difficulties—so clumsy that they could not be concealed—are almost incredible.

The normal man does not react in this manner.

He may become an "occasional criminal"—as distinct from one of the criminal type—in adversity. But his crime will bear some direct relation to his need; the motive will be obvious if the circumstances can be ascertained.

It seems to be fairly clear that these examples are illustrative of a type, and of a problem which in some of its aspects is closely interwoven with that of criminality. Genius more fully realized, and those manifestations of it which do not seem to involve any criminal reaction, remain to be considered, but in considering these we shall observe that this same fundamental principle is applicable.

In the case of Richelieu, as of Lenin, the phenomena of criminality, however, are not absent. With Richelieu they emerge formally and are more or less consciously applied to the solution of his social problem. Such is inevitably the result where genius operates in the sphere of action rather than of thought. Richelieu is perhaps above all others a thoroughly representative illustration. The example is chosen as raising in its acutest and therefore its most significant form the problem of comparison as between the social ethics of any Prime Minister and any Mr. Jones, to which allusion has already been made. The same principles are to be noted in operation, the circumstances only are different. To genius all is permitted,



and when genius succeeds, by no matter what means, its criminality is dispersed as leaven throughout the social organism.

This, from another point of view, is exemplified in considering the life and work of August Strindberg. The terrific impact of his hatred and indignation probably made a deeper impression upon contemporary society than any other single influence of the nineteenth century. In his youth he was a revolutionary probably more than once within reach of the law; he was later indicted for blasphemy, and he lived until an advanced age as an outcast and Ishmaelite. But the leaven was at work. He was to live to see his influence moulding society, to watch students, trade unions, and civic authorities passing in procession under his window to pay honour to him whom but a decade or two before they would have imprisoned if they could. Perhaps his stern, violent, but always noble face softened a little. He was beyond the restricted goods and evils of this world. Perhaps at this very moment he was being proclaimed as a prophet he was meditating upon those words with which *Inferno* ends, that he who thought himself a prophet was now revealed (to himself) as a braggart. The inner conflict continued.

It is at this point that we must approach, however gingerly, the ethical question of genius.

Objection might otherwise legitimately be made that examples have been chosen with a view to establishing the connexion between criminality and genius, and that only cases which seem to bear the thesis out have been selected. Genius is the resultant of an antisocial habit of mind, but as to whether it will emerge as criminality will depend, as we have seen, upon the extent to which the conflict can be resolved. Strindberg himself is an example of this. As the instrument of his literary art becomes more effective, criminality as such recedes further and further into the background. He ultimately becomes, on society's own verdict (so to call it), a good man. But this is not because of any capitulation to society by acceptance of its standards. It is rather that the forces by which the antisocial instinct is resolved have conquered and obliged society to accept the new ones.

It is often remembered of Shakespeare that he became at last a successful burgess, and forgotten that there is evidence, not fully authenticated but very strong, that in his youth his antisocial tendencies were highly developed. There is, for example, the tradition regarding the killing of Sir Thomas Lucy's deer which, it has been suggested, was the cause of his departure for London on foot. However this may be, there are no signs of revolt when he

began to write his plays. He seems to have been—if Greene's rather spiteful outburst is neglected—a popular and sociable man. But Shakespeare was gifted with a weapon to bring to the contest so incomparably efficient that society succumbed almost without a struggle. His plays, the objectification of his conflict, produced a veritable revolution. In support of his maxim that life followed art, Wilde used Shakespeare as an illustration. None could be more apt. There is something to be said for the theory that Shakespearean characters became possible as human beings because Shakespeare first conceived them.

In such an example, however, as Leonardo da Vinci, an evident antisocial bias is not to be expected. The explanation of this is to be looked for in the circumstances of his environment. He was one of the architects of the new order as his masters, those bandit princes of Italy, were the destroyers of the old. But he built new and at that time dreadful engines of war for Cesare Borgia and Sforza. All social standards were in flux and new values had to be constructed. That is perhaps the explanation of the great blossoming of genius, most pronounced in Italy, at that time; all men were freed to some extent from the weight of social fetters. Rigid standards no longer remained by which the social heretic could be judged and

thwarted. In Leonardo's brilliant fever of versatility there is to be found the passionate joy of the creator secure in the conviction that the destruction is not for him, but that he is free to build where and how he will.

In a related connexion the problem of Lucrezia Borgia arises. An endeavour has been made in this example to illustrate the reaction of the ordinarily normal social unit where, under the influence of the destructive impact of genius, the normal criterion has been obscured. Lucrezia Borgia does not, from this point of view, emerge as a personality so much as a prototype of the normal social order; of society, confused and dazzled by so brilliant an eruption of genius and criminality, which participates as an accessory after the fact in the crimes themselves. It is an example of the community acquiescing in, and even perhaps endeavouring to approximate to, the genius point of view. The result is necessarily a great social and political confusion. As witness of this is the internecine strife and political confusions of Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the sceptical and cynical views so widely held concerning religion, and the quite exceptional moral laxity of the period. It explains also the phenomenal increase in the manifestation of genius. Society, as it were, endeavours to express itself through acts and

words of those whom normally it makes every effort to thwart and suppress. Under such a stimulus genius must inevitably flourish. Lucrezia Borgia, however indirect an accessory as well to her brother's constructive imagination as to his crimes, is but a symbol of society whose disease being desperate is prepared to submit to a desperate remedy.

In the case of Rasputin, an illustration in some respects analogous is to be found. Society, no longer firmly anchored to its traditions, falls an easy prey to disrupting influence. In this example, however, a destructive impulse alone is at work. There is lacking in the destroying agency that sense of direction and of an ultimate goal which, in ample perspective, justifies the genius even while taking account of his crimes.

If the evidence of the examples is in fact representative there seems clearly to be a case for the genius type. But it does seem to be desirable to define in what sense the word type is employed. It used to be commonly held that there was a fundamental difference between the sane and the insane mind. Modern psychology, however, has shown that the distinction is one of degree and not of kind. The expression "type," therefore, when applied to genius as to other psychological categories, does not justify a view of mankind that encloses the various groups in watertight compartments.

But the impingement of one upon the other does not exclude the notion of relative independence. It is in this relative sense that the term is here used.

In a final examination of these examples the salient points of resemblance that unite Lazareti at one end of the chain to August Strindberg at the other cannot fail to be remarked. The individual differences are no less striking, but in many essentials each seems to meet the other. Each is upon common ground, and subject to a formula applicable to all.

## A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST

IT can hardly be claimed for this book that it has solved, or even indicated a method of solution of, any social problem. It has rather raised, at least by implication, the shadow of some new ones. An endeavour has been made to show, however, that there is a problem which has something more than merely academic interest. At all times there exists a public interested in crime, and at present it is a very large one. This is differently explained by the cynical and those who retain some remnant of belief in human nature, but the fact is in any case too obvious to deny. Actually crime is a phenomenon in which our social instincts compel us to be interested. The darker side of this preoccupation is the satisfaction that the detection and punishment of the criminal gives to man's repressed instinct of cruelty.

If criminality were merely an individual phenomenon, however widespread, it would have nothing like the social significance that it has if it be regarded as typical. The criminal type is obviously more important than the

criminal man. It is more important because it suggests a permanence if not an indestructibility which does not belong to man the individual. If the foregoing considerations regarding the existence of a criminal type are accepted as valid, it follows that criminality is necessarily a permanent factor in social evolution, a fact which certain types of social reformer, those holding the more extreme views concerning eugenics, and some other theorists might do well to note. With any mechanical view of society, it should not be impossible to evolve the perfect social machine, but our investigation seems rather to indicate that the relation of the individual to society is an affair of two variables and not one. The struggle of the individual in relation to society is not a wrestling with a fixed and constant force. If it were, unadjusted elements would be inevitably eliminated.

There is no evidence whatever that this is taking place, and the conclusion, as a matter of everyday experience, is irresistible that crimes and criminals may change but that the criminal type—in the sense that it has been explained—persists.

It would appear from the examples quoted that the conclusion is legitimate if not irresistible that genius and criminality have their beginnings in and are branches of a common stem,



and that are both abnormal. There need be no boggling at that word, since throughout it has been used to denote that which diverges in one direction or another from the accepted point of view. It is also clear from the examples, and this question is the most important of all, that actual criminality and genius often exist side by side. If this were accidental, or even highly exceptional, the case of the association of criminality and genius would be considerably weakened, but the evidence quoted indicates that it is not.

To return for a moment to the scholar-criminal of which Villon has been quoted as a type, a case of the highest psychological interest, which has not for good reasons been set out in detail, ought to receive some consideration here in support of the view that Villon represents a type, and not an exception.

On June 3rd, 1930, an undergraduate at Cambridge named D. N. Potts murdered his tutor, A. F. R. Wollaston, and Detective-Sergeant H. S. Willis by shooting them with an automatic pistol. He afterwards killed himself with the same weapon. Of this tragic case it is very important to remember that there was no evidence of insanity, nor any history of it, and that this undergraduate was an exceptionally brilliant student of only nineteen years of age.

It is at the same time not possible to regard Potts as entirely normal. He dressed at times in an outlandish fashion as though wishing to draw attention to himself. He was fond of the theatrical and fantastic rôle, and for no other reason apparently than giving an impression of the unusual and bizarre, he posed to those who did not know him as an exiled Russian prince. His restlessness at the university is clearly indicated by his expressed intention to take to a life of crime, this was apparently more or less of a joke, and the more serious project of organizing a jazz band to perform on the Continent. He and one of his associates frequently, if not always, went about armed. There had been threats on some occasions to commit suicide.

Later there was a much more serious development in which Potts and another were concerned together in issuing a cheque knowing that it could not be honoured. It was this formally criminal act which was one of the circumstances, if not the only one, which led up to the shooting tragedies.

We again see objectified in this unfortunate boy the conflict—as in Villon's case—between the world of thought and action. The tragedy of this brilliant scholar was his conviction of inferiority as far as the battle of life was concerned. There are almost pathetic attempts

to challenge life by crude extravagances of dress and demeanour; a bias towards crime in an endeavour to equalize the struggle; an actual crime, and finally a spectacular murder as the final act. The two personalities so far removed in time, so different in many aspects of character, do touch in all essentials in regard to the solution of their social problem. Both were scholars, both of criminal propensities, both capable on occasion of violence. The fundamental difference, of course, lies in the maturity of Villon's genius. With his poetry, which really dealt society a dreadful but salutary blow, he at least partially solved the equation. Wanting this outlet, murder and suicide are the result in the other case. But there is complete identity in *type*.

In the case of Oscar Wilde and his school a tendency in a similar direction is noticeable. There is the same conflict between the world of intellect and utilitarianism, but here we see the resolution take a different form. It actually gives birth to a *movement*, a kind of aristocratic and intellectualized Coquillard. There is to be observed more clearly in this case the great stirring of genius, an offensive operation directed against the established order with the unavowed, but not for that the less obvious intention of overthrowing it. It was all very well for the cartoonists and satirists of the

day to dismiss the *Æsthetic Movement* with "But how too utter," and gibes in like manner. It had deeper implications. We are by no means finished with æsthetic movements yet. Another and perhaps a more formidable lurks in the background awaiting the time and the season.

Another illustration is to hand in the extraordinary prevalence of suicide among German university students in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is scarcely a coincidence that this corresponded with the growing material wealth of Germany during that period. She was turning from a nation of thought to one of action. Scholars, at home in the atmosphere of the earlier period, found adjustment increasingly difficult in the face of growing militarism and commerce. Nietzsche's denunciatory voice is raised.

Have pity, God !

*He* means, I turn me to my warm

German abode,

Close German shelter from the storm.

This relation between genius, criminality, and society is evidenced by the very marked increase of neurosis among men of talent. Even a superficial acquaintance with the experimental work of the modern psychologists of the Vienna school suffices to bear this

out. Modern psychology is not a fad, but a technique which has been elaborated, if indeed it were not actually called forth, in response to a pressing need. This is immensely significant when it is considered in relation to the modern criminal problem.

The hypothesis of a genius type quite definitely presupposes what is commonly described as neurosis. We have reached in fact more or less the same conclusion as Lombroso. But with this important difference. The psychiatrists in general are inclined to make the neurosis a cause. Upon this theory it is an effect—a psychological emotional effect produced upon the unit in conflict with its environment. It is here that the distinction arises between great talent and genius. The man of great talent is not necessarily in conflict with his environment. The distinction is vital and of far-reaching effect. The man with the genius-neurosis (so to call it) must necessarily rise higher or sink lower than the talented social being.

Every society includes this intellectual-neurotic content, and it will increase in proportion as the social organization makes its adjustment more difficult. Thus a highly developed civilization such as exists in Europe, which inevitably involves an attempt at social standardization, actually encourages the emerg-

ence of genius by increasing the neurosis. It is a depressing observation, but a true one, that an advanced civilization while it encourages talent must repress, at least by implication, independence of thought out of harmony with the social traditions it builds up. This was certainly true of the medieval Catholic civilization, which became—the old shibboleth about the “dark ages” having long been exploded—extremely highly organized. But it suppressed freedom of thought. The result is to be observed in the growth of neurosis; the increasing prevalence of suicide, unnatural sexual offences, including bestiality, which so frequently resulted in the curious practice of the trial, condemnation, and execution both of the human and animal transgressors; and later still the emergence of the death wish in the form of the *Danse Macabre*. Finally, the tension became too great, and a revolution under the guise of reformation destroyed the medieval civilization. There followed the harvest, a great blossoming—of genius, such as medieval Europe never produced, and of crime.

History repeated itself in the mature civilization of eighteenth-century France, product of Richelieu and Mazarin's genius, which came to the ground with the Revolution; there was a second harvest of genius, and of crime.

With the third European phase, that of our own civilization, a still more delicate and complex machine has been evolved. Many there are who, in the events of the last twenty years, hear the low mutterings of the coming storm. The symptoms of neurosis are certainly abundantly present. Genius, for good or evil, has already raised its head in the huge but at present quite unassessable figure of Lenin who to resolve his conflict dared to experiment with a new—and what has been regarded hitherto—as an impracticable theory of civilization. The results of this, as of other uneasy movements in Europe, remain problematical. Where nothing is certain, it would be rash to do more than reassert a conviction of historical repetition. Genius will emerge again phoenix-like, however great the depth of ruin and disaster.

If the examples quoted are accepted as typical, and if the conclusions drawn up to this point are legitimate, one fact does at least stand out clearly,—the inevitability of genius and crime.

It is an inevitability which if it cannot be accepted with that "*amor fati*," Nietzsche's boldest and proudest affirmation, must be swallowed with a good grace.

This is a point of view which is of significance in its relation to modern views of social reform. Certain of its votaries seem to regard the science

of eugenics as a panacea for all social problems, and to hold that the elimination of the unfit would in a short space of time automatically result in the evolution of a social order approaching perfection. Assuming that it is possible, as probably it is, to decide the question of unfitness in all the more obvious cases physical and mental, there is a great deal to be said for the sterilization of mentally and physically deficient units. In a very large number of cases the results could not fail to be beneficial. But it is necessary to guard against too facile an optimism. There is no authority, eugenic or otherwise, in the heavens above nor in the earth beneath nor in the waters under the earth which can eliminate the conflict between man the individual and society. The direction, and to some extent the characteristics of the conflict, may, and often have been changed, but the conflict remains. The higher social organism will be equally liable to the production of neurosis, and in consequence will be no stranger to the phenomena of genius and crime. It is indeed arguable that the type of neurosis produced will be more dangerous in its effects than that accompanying a more elementary phase of social organization.

Contemporary evidence tends to bear this out. The social conditions of to-day produce criminal types, fortunately rare, which would



have been impossible even in the eighteenth century. Apart from this phenomenon, which we shall consider in a moment, the standard of ability of the criminal has increased. He, no less than the law-abiding, benefits by improved social organization. This has been denied in the face of a weight of evidence it is impossible to ignore. The mail-bag type of robbery succeeds by reason of organization and planning by first-class brains. The staff work in connexion with the removal and subsequent rifling of safes is arranged with an attention to detail and a knowledge of how to direct and co-ordinate operations which compels admiration.

This is to consider an everyday type of crime only too common, and much too often successful. In the less common phenomenon of really large scale swindling criminal technique, as the recent Portuguese Banknote affair shows, actually approaches genius.

It will be recalled that the principal in this case was never arrested. This is not altogether surprising since Marang, as he called himself, was the equal in mental capacity if he were not the superior of the subtlest detective brains in Europe.

The crime was certainly a conception of genius. Having once induced Messrs. Waterlow to believe that he had authority to open a

bank in Portugal—and apparently he had such authority—there was no difficulty, having regard to the circumstances he explained so plausibly, in obtaining the notes. The ordinary criminal's conception would have gone no further than this. He would have endeavoured to sell them abroad through the ordinary fence. This was not Marang's method. The bank was in fact opened in Portugal, financed of course in the first place with genuine notes—as far as the actual printing was concerned—which Messrs. Waterlow had unsuspectingly produced. There was never apparently any suggestion made that the bank was improperly conducted, except from the point of view that it carried on at least its preliminary business with notes which had been unwittingly forged, if that term is allowable, by the official printers to the Portuguese Government.

By means of clever interception of letters and forged replies it was made to appear that the Portuguese authorities had acquiesced in this issue. The Portuguese Government itself had no reason to suspect the bank since it appeared to be financially sound. On the other hand, Messrs. Waterlow were also apparently perfectly satisfied since the bank existed in fact.

That such a fraud should have been possible seems almost incredible, but those are the facts.

The Portuguese Government was awarded damages against the company for this contributory negligence. His Lordship in delivering judgment said that negligence had been clearly established. It appears that insufficient inquiries were made, but owing to the brilliant conception of the swindle the story was certainly plausible enough on the face of it.

The necessarily unconfirmed report of the sequel is the most exquisite touch of all. It was reported that Marang was actually seen in court when the action in which Messrs. Waterlow were the defendants was being heard, but that he escaped before it was possible to detain him!

Apart, however, from the higher criminal mentality which examples of this kind suggest, more sinister illustrations are to be found among actual genius-criminals of whom the French Dr. Marain is a type.

This extraordinary case began with rumours which centred round the clinic of Dr. Marain, an eminent specialist, which the police did not at first believe. He was supposed by the ignorant inhabitants of the neighbourhood to practise magic. That the rumours should have taken this form was no doubt due, in the opinion of the police, to his use of ultra-violet light treatment. An unusual number of deaths, however, did occur and the authorities were

on the alert in case anything further should transpire. There was no evidence whatever upon which to detain or interrogate the doctor.

Owing, however, to the suspicions aroused, a will filed by Dr. Marain, made by his aunt and in his favour, came into the hands of the police for investigation. The document had been forged by an alteration of date. It was obvious that something was wrong, but the police judged it unwise to arouse the doctor's suspicions by interrogating him until something more was known regarding the uglier rumour.

A girl agent of the police was accordingly despatched to the clinic with a letter of introduction from a famous surgeon. The intention was that she should be admitted as a patient, and so be in a position to report if anything appeared amiss. It was arranged that an agent of the police disguised as a postman should call at the clinic with a registered letter. It being the rule in France that postmen must deliver a registered letter to the person to whom it is addressed, this was thought to be the best method of insuring contact between the girl and headquarters.

A few days later the police received an urgent message from the girl, through this medium, imploring immediate assistance.

A search warrant was procured forthwith

and a strong force of police accompanied by experts proceeded immediately to the clinic, arrested Dr. Marain and detained other members of the staff. The girl agent of the police, who was very ill, was despatched to a hospital.

That forgery had been committed there was no question, but as to whether Dr. Marain was responsible for it, or knew that the will was forged, remained to be proved, however strong the presumptive evidence. The rest was for the most part rumour, but there were hints—concerning which the police were very doubtful—that Dr. Marain had been experimenting upon his so-called patients with a ray which induced a malignant inflammatory condition. It appeared on the face of it fantastic, but there was the illness of their own agent who was perfectly healthy upon entering the clinic. She had made a statement upon being released from the clinic confirming these rumours. There was no reason to doubt its accuracy. The girl, although physically ill, was perfectly lucid and precise in her report.

Interrogated by the *juge d'instruction* and seeing that the game was up, Dr. Marain made a most extraordinary confession. He admitted forgery and uttering the will. The motive had been his passionate desire to carry on the research work in connexion with his discovery of a new form of ultra-violet, or allied ray,

which he was convinced would cure cancer and other malignant growths. Money, however, was wanted, and this was the only means of obtaining it.

He further admitted causing the death of a number of the inmates of his clinic, including his wife, by treating them with this ray. The rays, if curative, were very dangerous, and there were circumstances under which they produced malignant inflammation which caused death.

All this is quite probable. Even the ordinary ultra-violet lamp is capable of setting up inflammatory conditions and blindness. If the doctor was mistaken in his conviction that he had discovered a new ray, one in the ultra-violet region might have caused these deaths if used in certain ways. It is probably true, however, that Dr. Marain did make some new discovery.

The interrogation was dramatically cut short. Dr. Marain agreed to hand over the papers in connexion with his research if his sister could be asked to bring them from the clinic. A message was sent to his sister who came to the office of the *juge*. In greeting her brother she managed in some manner to convey poison to him without being observed, and to take some herself.

Both collapsed and died with startling sudden-

ness in the presence of the *juge d'instruction* and his assistants.

The conclusion of this strange incident contains the principal item of psychological interest. Nothing of importance was found among the papers brought by Dr. Marain's sister to the office of the *juge*—except a letter.

In this he reiterated his confession saying that he had foreseen his arrest and prepared for it. Those who had died through his experiments had been sacrificed in the interests of humanity. His discovery, which would have saved so many lives, justified the death of a few individuals. The secret of it would die with him.

And it did. Even while the clinic was being searched very shortly after the deaths took place, an explosion and a fire occurred which destroyed it.

There is to be observed in this remarkable case an example of that rare phenomenon, a genius-criminal in the literal sense. This definition is allowable even if Dr. Marain was certifiably insane, a question which cannot in the circumstances be decided. He was a good-looking man of winning address, of quite exceptional intelligence, and a doctor eminent in his profession. His views regarding the justification of sacrificing human life for the sake of his scientific discoveries make him violently and dangerously antisocial—but assuming his conviction was not a delusion—

not necessarily insane. He cannot be compared with those rare and distressing examples of brilliant surgeons who have become homicidal maniacs. There is in such cases no reasonable motive. Dr. Marain had a motive and a laudable one. It was the means by which he endeavoured to realize his aim which were criminal. He did visualize something beyond, his difficulty was that he could not adjust himself to things as they were. To genius, in fact, all was permitted.

But for our immediate purpose it is relevant to remark that it is the highly evolved society that produces phenomena of this type. There is in an allied and rather less sinister connexion the example of the eminent Italian professor, a physiologist, who when he was carrying on his experiments relating to the condition of pain confessed that the cries of the animals he tortured gave him positive pleasure. Sadism is not formally criminal though frequently criminal in its results, but it is curious to observe that it has, in not a few cases, formed part of the inspiration of certain branches of scientific research. It may have inspired in Dr. Marain. The most significant point which could be referred to the argument of abnormality is that all his victims were women. In at least two cases they were young and good looking. There may have been a serious sexual inhibition.



However this may be, these considerations and examples seem to indicate that the highly evolved society, efficient as its machinery may prove to be in regulating and even reducing the cruder kinds of crime, has done nothing to remove its fundamental causes for the very good reason that they are inherent in social organization itself. It tends on the contrary to prove favourable to the evolution of improved, new, and strange forms of criminality.

From this direction a very significant consideration is approached. It has been observed that criminality is inevitable, is it also salutary? To put the matter more precisely, have genius, crime, and even insanity a certain social value?

Apostles of eugenics and social reformers would deny this. It has been contended, and quite consistently, that; even if the operation of a eugenical system eliminated the genius, the compensating advantages of the elimination of the unfit makes the experiment worth while. This interesting and essentially modern view is of very dubious validity. If neurosis and mental instability were hereditary and never environmental, the matter would be quite simple. It is merely necessary to eliminate by sterilization or other means all the unfit, and the goal is already in sight. There are some apostles of eugenics who seem, rather naïvely, to envisage the solution of the

problem in this elementary form. On the other hand, if environment, where the stock is good, also continued to produce a certain percentage of the maladjusted and unfit, the process of elimination would presumably be continuous.

In either case we must fall back upon a reconsideration of Galton's types to which allusion was made in Chapter I. The implication of such an inquiry as Galton's suggests a definition of the ideal of a normal type. It is upon this rock that the whole practice of eugenics in any advanced form is in danger of shipwreck. Followed consistently, it must necessarily resolve itself into an attempt to standardize the individual. It would be rash to assert in the twentieth century that even so gigantic a task as this could not be partially realized, but it is necessary to consider in this connexion the probable result.

Evolution in the sense of change—for perhaps our “progress” is illusory—depends upon struggle. If this with its implication of difference between individual and individual were eradicated, it is difficult to conceive of evolutionary change continuing. Is it not possible in these circumstances that man's instinct for survival would atrophy, being apparently unnecessary, as other instincts have done; and is it possible to decide what the effect of so

dangerous a complacency might be? The enemies of his own society remain as perhaps the one antidote to man's peace of mind; they keep him alert and watchful, keyed up for emergency. That may be a blessing in disguise. Perhaps our criminals are necessary.

And genius also. Despite argument to the contrary, individuals, even if individuals are not free agents in the traditional theological sense, profoundly influence the course of mankind's affairs. Even the too rigidly scientific interpretation of history makes any other conclusion appear not quite natural. The genius struggles with society and society overthrows him, but in the very act of doing so is obliged to change its ground. Or in the alternative, the genius overthrows society and it is rebuilt anew. In either case there is change, evolution, becoming.

We do not, of course, know for certain that our interpretation of what is called the struggle for existence does correspond to any ultimate reality. It may be that there are as yet undiscovered possibilities in a conception of uniformity as a final and mature fruit of man's evolution. But on the face of it, the evidence is the other way, and without new facts, new theories are not permissible.

There is no intention to make these final words a criticism of modern social systems.

But it does seem appropriate to remark here that from another point of view it is the inherent difficulty of such social systems as those of Fascism or Communism. Both, in a last analysis, seem to appeal to a monstrously anthropomorphized State, relying for its idea of stability upon a perfectly developed collective consciousness. What are we to think of such a man as Ampère, that first and greatest of electrical engineers? He was so absent-minded that on one occasion he wrote a new formula upon the back of a cab which he was obliged to pursue all over Berlin in another cab in order to retain a record of it. How would he have fared under such a system? What a modern psychiatrist would have had to say to him is hardly doubtful. It is just such men who, because, rather than in spite of, their pathological aberrations—Ampère is but one of a great army—have made our modern civilization possible.

Perhaps genius and crime are immortal elements in human affairs as Nietzsche thought.

There the gallows, rope and hooks ;  
 And the hangman's beard is red ;  
 People round and poisoned looks—  
 Nothing new and nothing dread !  
 Know it well, from fifty sources,  
 Laughing in your face I cry ;  
 Would ye hang me ? Save your forces !  
 Why kill me who cannot die !

Beggars ye ! who hate the tougher  
Man who holds the envied lot ;  
True I suffer, true I suffer—  
As to you—ye rot, ye rot !  
I am breath, dew, all resources,  
After fifty hangings ; why !  
Would ye hang me ? Save your forces !  
Why kill me who cannot die ?

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This tale of the Buchan country is outstanding as a first novel. We smell again the peaty air and hear the braw Scots accent.

### DEAD WATER

C. E. Lawrence

The story of an old inn, and of strange influences from the past that affect two happy young moderns who come to live there and are caught up in matters long since past.

